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SEVEN AGES OF CHILDHOOD

SEVEN AGES OF CHILDHOOD

BY

ELLA LYMAN CABOT
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INTRODUCTION

In this sketch of childhood I have divided the period from coming into the world to coming of age — prophetic names! — into seven overlapping periods. I will briefly anticipate these divisions to show the reasons for my classification and to suggest a few of the best available books on each period.

The *first*, Infancy, is, students of childhood agree, the period of swiftest learning. Babies indeed sleep two thirds of the time, but how industrious they are when awake. A baby's life runs something like this: Study turning my eyes; eat, or rather drink; go to sleep; study the reactions of grown-ups; eat; go to sleep; learn to chuckle; eat; go to sleep; practise the fine art of clutching toes; eat; go to sleep; get said toes into my mouth; eat; go to sleep; study what grown-ups do when I drop things; eat; go to sleep; protest against soap in the eyes and mouth; resign myself; eat; go to sleep. It seems simple to an outsider. Yet all the vocational training and language drill that is driven in later, cannot vie for a moment with what any baby learns in his first two years. We find golf-playing a difficult and delicate bit of achievement; but what of standing when you have no acquaintance save with flatness and all-fours. Russian is a troublesome tongue to acquire, but to feel out the exact spot in one's mouth where *p*'s and *q*'s can be made

and to distinguish them one from another is far more subtle a task. And then to mind one's *p*'s and *q*'s in conduct, to find out when squealing is a valuable means to being fed and when it ends in rebuff — this is in itself a study.

I once saw a sensitive child of two lifting the camellias from a vase on the low table and splashing her hands in the water. It was a joyous game, but as she did it she looked wistfully at her mother. Two expressions flickered at once, like sun and shadow over the baby's face. She hoped her deed would be approved as humorous, and a twinkle had started in her eye; but the act might be wicked, and to provide for that event, a shadow of swift repentance was ready also. How difficult to master are the inconsistent ways of grown-ups; yet before babies can speak they have studied human behavior, have puzzled over us, loved us, forgiven us, and rejoiced with us. Truly every mother's baby is the marvel she believes it to be.

Because children's growth during infancy is at once amazing and subtly concealed, it is especially valuable to know both the thorough and the imaginative studies of this period. Not one kind of study only but both are essential to insight. You can learn many facts concerning the early months of infancy through Wilhelm Preyer's *Mind of a Child;* but Rabindranath Tagore's *Crescent Moon* teaches an insight of which Preyer is unaware, something exquisite and far shining as is the new moon at twilight. As a study of the first year Millicent Shinn's *Biography of a Baby* is unsurpassed.

When a child begins to have fluency in language and in movement he runs away from infancy. This *second* period, from about three years to seven, is the Dramatic Age. Almost before he has mastered the initial resources of the modern world, a child of three or four turns to things of the spirit. What magnificent wisdom he shows! If our generation would but take the path of this imaginative age, civilization would lose its dulness. Eyes have we, but we see not; ears have we, but we hear not the sounds of the spirit. The more worldly-wise we become the less we use our eyes, our ears, our feet. The wisdom of children is that, as soon as they acquire the tools of language and of skill in handling their bodies and the surrounding world, they turn to create art and speak poetic prose. *The Ignominy of Being Grown Up* is the brilliant title of an essay about a boy of five by Samuel McChord Crothers.[1] Yes; it is ignominious to be grown up if it means that we have ignobly cast away the gift of imagination which almost every one of us possessed and used at the age of four. A child of this age is never bored as grown-ups so often are, and I well remember one who, physically handicapped, soared into spiritual happiness. I was travelling to California on a sultry day in July some years ago, and my discomfort, in conjunction with my temper, was aggravated by the passing of our train into a long, smoky tunnel. Just as the air was getting unbreathable and our irritated temper was rising with the rise in temperature, there came

[1] *By the Christmas Fire*, p. 131. Houghton Mifflin Company.

from the stateroom a cheery pipe on the mouth-organ,—a song of victory. A little blind boy of five, with the thinnest, wobbly white legs, stood carolling through the smoke, as unconscious of his mission as is the meadow-lark singing on sandy plains a carol of spring and sky. His message was the message of *Pippa Passes*, that blessed message sent by childhood everywhere, like gentians to refresh the languid colors of a faded world. He was not bored, oh, no! He was in a magic dungeon, and, like Saint Peter and Saint Paul in prison, found his way out through angelic messengers and song. Children escape from all prisons, are free from all poverty, because wherever they are confined, they create.

We hardly need to read about the Dramatic Age. Children at that time reveal by word and act what no one else can quite describe. Yet Robert Louis Stevenson in *A Child's Garden of Verses* and in *Child's Play*, Sir James Barrie in all his sketches of Peter Pan, and Rabindranath Tagore in *The Crescent Moon* illumine the children's world with exquisite sympathy. As interpretations of everyday life James Sully's *Studies in Childhood* and Joseph Lee's chapters on the Dramatic Age in *Play in Education* are delightful and enlightening at once.

The dramatic period is succeeded by an age of prose which I have called the Angular Age. The child, in James Russell Lowell's piquant phrase, "has loudened to a boy." It is a time which often coincides with that

of going to a "real" school. This enormously impressive occasion of the opening day in his first grade was well characterized by a small urchin: "My class," he stated proudly, "*marches* into the hall, but Frances' [his younger sister, still humbly in kindergarten] just *gathers*." I believe, however, that school happens to come at an age when desire for facts has forced back imagination, rather than that learning destroys dreaming.

I have just used the word "urchin." It means in its original tongue *prickly*. Now prickliness is a quality characteristic of this period. Children in the Dramatic Age are too absorbed in great events to be prickly or to prick others. But from seven to nine second dentition sometimes makes children irritable, and in the vigorous period from about nine to twelve all urchins exult in making themselves felt, and therefore in bumping up against whatever will further this important end, be it knocking a ball or teasing a Chinaman. Girls as well as boys may possess this spirit. "During the self-assertive period I must have been an obnoxious youngster," writes a charming girl, now nineteen. "I knew it all; I wanted to do what the boys did; I was noisy, slangy, and rude. This surprises me in retrospect, for on the whole I think I was a rather quiet and sensitive child. But at that time nothing was worth while but muscle, endurance, speed; perfection of the body in all sorts of tests and endurance."

The Angular Age is a *trying* age, indeed, in a literal

sense; it tests the resources of parents, teachers, and, I may add reminiscently, of younger sisters. We need new and buoyant springs of good-humor to bear the heavier strains. For at this period boys and girls jump spiritually on everything around them as babies jump on sofas. Parents, like sofas, need to have strong and flexible supports in humor and good sense. But even these are not enough. Resourcefulness is needed; an extra fund beyond daily requirement. For trouble comes when the mother has not foreseen hot days, rainy days, restless days. Then do the children clamor round her, as chambermaids and porters, bell-boys and boots clamor round the European traveller who is leaving a hotel.

The wind of my memory blows through a cool, white-washed hall where on hot summer days my mother read to her children. I can still hear Cooper's *Spy* read aloud to the strange accompaniment of jig-saws. We three girls were sewing with silent stitches, and the two boys, carving out patterns with their saws, were much too absorbed to think of teasing us. If the grating noise troubled the reader, she was too happy over the inward peace her plan secured to mention the rasping sound. To mothers there are distinctions in noises.

There are distinctions also made by the sympathetic writers on this period, among whom I would name especially Joseph Lee in *Play in Education*, pp. 166 to 245, and 296 to 318, and Hugh Walpole's sensitive study in *Jeremy* of the soul of a boy of nine. Owen Johnson's

The Varmint is enlightening as well as entertaining, while Kipling's *Stalky and Co.* and Booth Tarkington's *Penrod* are almost too well known to mention.

The years ranging from eleven or twelve to fourteen I call the Paradoxical Age. Occasionally, of course, the time goes by happily and uneventfully. Indeed I had no idea how insistent and wearying the period often is until I gathered data on these years from many students in my classes. Those who have borne its self-depreciation and rebellion can best give suggestions for its treatment. I give a pupil's reaction on this thorny time:

"From the time I was twelve until I was fifteen, I felt there was nothing in the world I did not know and that my judgment on every subject was superior to that of my mother. Up to that time I had never dreamed of being disobedient and I was about as quiet and peaceful a child as could be. Suddenly I began to have very decided ideas of my own, and when they did not coincide with mother's I tried as best I could to carry out my way. I was very rebellious and thoroughly horrid. I deceived mother and every one else to get what I wanted. I particularly cared about doing the things my friends were allowed to do, but mother was very strict and kept a close watch over me. I would invent any story to get away and play with my friends. Eventually I was always discovered, but that never prevented me from trying another and a new way some other day. This horrid age passed away just as it came, for I began

to realize the right and wrong of what I was doing and desired to do what pleased my mother.

"It is at this age that parents so often make the mistake of treating their child as a child. They should treat the child as a person who reasons and has ideas of his own; they ought to make a child their companion in every way. A child is so peculiarly sensitive at this age that the feeling of being misunderstood is common. Older brothers and sisters are inclined to increase this sensitiveness, and the parents should be on their guard to prevent it. Between the ages of twelve to fourteen, when a child stands on the threshold of maturity, he should be treated with excessive kindness and understanding, for to my mind that is the hardest age in one's life."

What help can one get from the literature of this period?

The classic book describing it in greatest detail is *Adolescence*, by G. Stanley Hall. It is, however, a storeroom of somewhat unsorted evidence and in my experience tends to bewilder any one except an expert. Two chapters, the first on "Adolescence in Boys" (vol. I, p. 453), and the second on "Adolescence in Literature and Biography" (vol. I, p. 513), will, however, be found of special interest. Slaughter's *Adolescence* is recommended as short and sensible. Irving King's *The High School Age* is sound and discriminating, and Margaret Slattery's *Girl in Her Teens* will help the mothers of girls. Several of the most prolific writers on early ado-

lescence seem to me to have exaggerated its significance. It is, indeed, difficult to keep exactly the right attitude toward these years. But since its pathos is often concealed under moodiness or rebellion, we cannot go wrong if we remember to look for the invisible good and blind our eyes to the trying visible. Those who repel affection at this time are more likely than not to be those who crave it most.

Above all, as Hall points out, it is important to treat boys and girls at adolescence not only with sympathy, but as equals and with respect. There is something in each person to be caught and respected, even when it appears and disappears as shyly as a trout.

It has seemed to me best to treat as a distinct period the succeeding age of Team Play, often called the Age of the Gang. True, it overlaps the Paradoxical Age, for it often begins by eleven and reaches its highest curve at fifteen. Yet it has a distinct and important character of its own and one easily studied, since the books on this period, especially in relation to boys, are admirable. There is J. Adams Puffer's brilliant essay on *The Boy and His Gang*, G. W. Fiske's *Boy Life and Self-Government*, and several memorable chapters in Joseph Lee's *Play in Education*.

Boys are more aggressive and therefore insert their claims into the minds of most writers of this period. Girls are somewhat persistently ignored as members of a team. For this reason I have dwelt at length on their

achievements in clans. Perhaps the essence of this period is best summed up in the dictum that you must now deal with the gang rather than with the individual in it, since he is finding his individuality through membership. The part of parents is therefore clear, though not always easy. See that the gang has good leaders and let the father, if possible, be the most popular of them.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher, wise in the ways of parents and children, tells us that "a boy whose family have always been his gang, needs and will seek no other."[1] I myself doubt whether the call of the gang outside the home either can be or *should* be resisted; but Mrs. Fisher's underlying contention, that the home gang must aim to set the standard of the outside gang, cannot be over-accented.

For in the choice of comrades and of heroes lie the seeds of future social and even political life. Gangs at street-corners, secret societies gathered in barns, have significant relations to the future as well as the present. True, the hurtful gang is usually outgrown. But disillusionment itself is tragic. Even when a gang in one's town, or a heroine in boarding-school is found to be pernicious and dropped, a mind clogged for a time with evil memories often remains and but slowly heals.

Who, then, are the best leaders for this age? Under the guidance of G. Stanley Hall[2] an interesting study has been made of qualities that attract popularity. The traits preferred by boys, as evidenced by answers to a

[1] *Self-Reliance*, p. 76. [2] *Educational Problems.*

circular letter, are jollity, good temper, justice, and, unquestionably, skill in athletics. There are then two key-words that unlock this epoch—games and gangs. Here, in the words of Hamlet, "The play's the thing." Here, if anywhere, loyalty in play and in comradeship will grow and flourish.

Up to the age of sixteen most lads and a fair proportion of girls are careless of dress and manners. From sixteen on, Nature has her revenge and parents their triumph. Mothers who have struggled to secure a modicum of cleanliness in their boys, smile to see well-groomed hands tying new and gorgeous neckties. "Up to this time there was no use speaking to him about his nails; now there is no necessity." So Lee puts it.[1]

This time, which I have called the Age of Romance, is normally one of happiness and physical buoyancy joined occasionally to a critical coldness toward those no longer beautiful or young. This hardness abashes inexperienced elders and is often puzzling to those made tender by the invading sorrows and joys of life. Intercourse with the self-sufficient young is difficult, even terrifying, to older mortals inexperienced in the ways of youth. Yet I cannot but feel that this coldness often conceals a coming openness and sweetness.

Next to the Dramatic Age which in its happiness it somewhat resembles, this epoch is the age of greatest charm. Here is the youth of the world, equipped with

[1] *Play in Education*, p. 104. The Macmillan Company.

enthusiasm, keen for self-sacrifice, bringing good tidings up the mountain of our pilgrimage. I know no more delicate expression of the fascination of this Romantic Age than this from Jane Addams's *Spirit of Youth:* "Nothing is more certain than that each generation longs for a reassurance as to the value and charm of life and is secretly afraid lest it lose its sense of the youth of the earth. The most praiseworthy journey grows dull and leaden unless it is companioned by youth's iridescent dreams. . . . For the first time in civilization young girls are being prized for their labor power more than their innocence, their gaiety, their tender beauty, their immemorial ability to reaffirm the charm of existence. . . . It is only the artists endowed with immortal youth who see the young creatures as they are. It is as if our eyes were holden to the mystic beauty, the redemptive joy, the civic pride which these multitudes of young people might supply to our dingy towns." [1]

Over the years between fourteen and seventeen *The Spirit of Youth*, by Jane Addams, throws a diffused and exquisite light. Joseph Lee gives in *Play in Education*, one chapter on "Boys and Girls," that is well worth studying. Booth Tarkington's *Seventeen* is refreshingly humorous, though one allows for its gay exaggeration.

How quickly apple-blossoms fall! A heavy shower, an overpowering heat, and the petals wilt and sever. There is left only what Opal Whiteley's observant diary of

[1] Jane Addams: *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, pp. 1, 9, 140.

childhood characterizes as "little round faces." Dour, hard faces, too, they are, but nevertheless the emergence of fruit. So the Age of Romance passes into the Age of Problems. It comes almost as inevitably as the falling of petals and for a similar reason. The desire to be fruitful sloughs off contentment.

Of course this struggling discontent is not invariably present. When necessity demands a narrow and definite choice, or when some strong bent clears the way of opposing interests, the decisions of this Age of Problems may come happily and almost automatically. But to a large number of boys, and now to an increasing number of girls, this time of choice and rejection is intensely painful. A darkness comes upon them that sometimes reminds me of the wings of the monstrous crow in *Alice in Wonderland*, so gay and absurd a darkness is it to the outsider, so overwhelming and dense to the heroes and heroines of my tale. This era may be forced by the pressure of economic need to begin as early as fifteen; it may be delayed (as in the case of college students) until twenty or twenty-one. Indeed, there is a temptation, as many of us know, to postpone decision by keeping on with study, because one is afraid to plunge into the icy sea of confronting problems.

More than the other times of rapid change, this is associated with claims and calls from the surrounding world, the impending claims of work and marriage. Those who have been enjoying a *dolce far niente* suddenly want to find work. Then they find it far from sweet to have no

skill in a new field. Those who have excelled in their own light-hearted social sphere are confronted with adult programmes and standards and feel no ability to cope with them. Consternation follows. No, in many cases this is not too strong a word. For boys and girls at this epoch are at once self-centred and lonely, ambitious and useless. They feel that they have n't made good, and the choice of their future hangs over them as momentous and irrevocable. Their parents often think most about the needs of the little and helpless baby who cannot hold up its head. But this Age of Problems is itself rebirth. These youths cannot for the time hold up their heads. They too need help until (winning out) they forget they ever were self-distrustful.

To understand the Age of Problems we must turn to great novelists or dramatists, rather than to books on psychology. Shakespeare knows how his young and world-weary Portia can find her happiness in Bassanio. George Meredith sees Nesta leap to rescue her parents, or Beauchamp struggle to his career. George Eliot realizes how lonely Maggie can be and how she can develop even through her loneliness. Tolstoy mirrors the shifting moods of Levin or of Natascha.

For those who wish to read further in all seven periods an admirably, discriminating bibliography of Childhood and Youth will be found in William Byron Forbush's *Guide Book to Childhood*, while for those who wish to own a single book covering different periods, I would suggest

Joseph Lee's *Play in Education*, or John M. Tyler's *Growth and Education.* There are many ways of learning about childhood and youth. We need all available staffs. Earl Barnes in his *Studies in Education* has classified in an interesting way the types of material for child study. These types consist of:

Undirected observations
Miscellaneous collections
Personal reminiscences
Published autobiography
Artistic interpretations
Direct studies
Data planned through syllabi

Each of these methods has its value when balanced by the others. G. Stanley Hall has gathered through distinguished pupils many miscellaneous collections, notably those in *Aspects of Child Life and Education.* John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* is a classic in that field. Tolstoy's *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, and Hugh Walpole's delicious *Jeremy* range between autobiography and artistic interpretation. Wilhelm Preyer in *The Mind of a Child* has worked by deliberate experiment and direct observations. Earl Barnes has done most valuable work in the editing of syllabi.

There is value in the records of others. There is still more value in learning to record. Any one who reads attentively the studies of children made by others will become aware that he, too, has something new to con-

tribute either in autobiography or biography. My hope is that both parents and teachers will give us from their priceless stores far more largely than in the past. I shall repeat this request again and again. We Americans are wasteful enough in material supplies, but that is of no consequence in comparison with our loss of insight in throwing forgetfully away the gay and carolling wisdom that children pour like bird-songs upon us.

Such are the Seven Ages of Childhood. But each age of childhood and youth does not pass once and forever. It returns when we think it is gone, as the sunset that fades in the west lingers to light up the eastern sky with delicate transitory rose and gold. Is this not true even into old age? There are times when the tide of youth flows in again and we are playmates with our grand-children on equal terms. Middle age sets its strong hand on our shoulders more and more firmly, but now and again we shake it off and leap back into blossoming youth. So it is with the epochs of childhood. The imaginative child, proud of being a big boy, is in illness tenderly lured back into infancy, for he feels once more the need of safe-enfolding arms. The child in the Angular Age sniffs the keen scent of the dramatic and yields himself for a little space to the charm of knights and clashing arms. The adolescent youth, convalescent from his *Welt-Schmerz*, creeps back into boisterous, self-forgetting play. Parents can harvest these precious moments that link together their children's disjointed lives.

For parents push out as an advance guard for their children. They go ahead over the coming path anticipating its dangers; they give news of the great hopes and battles that are to come, and of the cause which unites the moving army and makes its march more than worth while.

But now I must defend my classification of childhood and youth. Is there any good reason for thus cleaving child life into periods and especially into *seven* periods? A rainbow, exquisitely blending the seven colors of the spectrum, refuses any dividing lines between the shades. So any division of the continuous and subtly changing life of a child is arbitrary and, I might add, intrusive. Even more it must seem artificial to cut into exactly seven periods, like slices of a pie, the life of the groups of American children whom I have chosen to study. I agree that the procedure is an imperfect one; nevertheless I believe that it illuminates rather than obscures childhood. Not to distinguish is to extinguish. No one sees the full beauty of a rainbow until he distinguishes its seven colors and then blends them again. Before I studied the different aspects of child life, it was blurred to me. As I began to see vividly the likeness of children to one another at special periods, their uniqueness startled me the more. Children are enchantingly unlike one another; but they are also alike, both in the characteristics of each era and in the succession of epochs. Life, the steersman of their fragile boat, is guiding them

through channels marked out by the race. To find what is alike is our greatest help in education as in medicine. Only when we see both the common problems and the unique response of any child can we assist him wisely.

Classification, then, when it is free from solemnity and rigidity, will help us to recognize our children at first sight; it may also — and this is to me far more significant — develop in us the power of second sight and third and fourth sight! On the solid foundations of what is common we may learn to see what is unique.

My division of childhood and early youth into exactly seven periods may also be questioned. My only answer is that for twelve years or more, I have compared this classification with the children themselves and that it is the best I know. It also corresponds on the whole to the divisions made by three of the keenest students of human nature in childhood, Joseph Lee, George W. Fiske, and George E. Johnson.

Mr. Lee in *Play in Education* studies in detail only four periods: Infancy, the Dramatic Age, Big Injun, and the Age of the Gang. But in the latter part of his book he brings in the Apprentice Age, which illustrates several of the problems of the Age of Problems, and his chapters on "Hero Worship" and on "Boys and Girls" correspond closely to mine on the Age of Romance. Mr. Lee omits, therefore, only the characteristics of what I have called the Paradoxical Age, the years between twelve and fourteen. But this period, under the name of Early Adolescence, is accented by almost all

students of childhood and has such marked traits that I am convinced that it should be named by itself, rather than included in the period of Team Play.

Mr. Johnson, whose concern is with the best games, divides the years between seven and twelve into two sections; while Mr. Lee and Mr. Fiske consider them as a single period. Mr. Fiske disregards what I call the Dramatic Age and divides the period between three and eleven into two groups, *both* of which he calls the Clique Period. It seems to me that the interests of children in the years between three and seven are so unlike those of the years between seven and eleven that they should be called by a distinguishing name. A diagram (on page xxvi) will best show the divergencies and likenesses between my classification and those of Lee, Fiske, Johnson, Puffer, Tyler, and King.

Now that I have accented likeness in various points, I will turn to the diversity which is brought out by differences of environment, of sex, and of temperament.

Environment, both physical and moral, retards or forces children ahead as darkness and sun, as frost or greenhouse heat retard or advance the ripening of fruit. California develops tall children as well as tall trees. The average girl reaches maturity in California, a physician tells me, two years earlier than one in the Eastern or Northern States. At the other extreme from this luxuriant and swift development we find the spindly growth of the under-nourished children of poverty. Like plants grown in darkness and striving to reach the

CLASSIFICATION OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

	CABOT: *Seven Ages*	LEE: *Play in Education*	FISKE: *Boy Life and Self-Government*	PUFFER: *The Boy and His Gang*	JOHNSON:[1] *Education by Plays and Games*	KING: *Psychology of Child Development*	TYLER: *Growth and Education*
Infancy	0–3	0–3	..		0–3	0–3	0–3
Dramatic Age	3–7	3–6	3–6 and 7–11 "Clique Age"	..	4–6	3–6 "Play Period"	3–6 "Early Childhood"
Angular Age	7–11	7–11			7–9 10–12		6–9 "Development of motor instincts"
Early Adolescence —Paradoxical Age	12–14		10 to 14 "Age of Chivalry"	10 to 16 "Gang Age" culminating at 13	13–15	"Early teens"[2]	9–12 / 12–15 "Pubertal years"
Age of the Gang or Team Play	11–16	11–14			..	"Latter half of teens"[2]	
Age of Romance	15–18	14 to 21 "Apprentice Age"[3] Romance 16 +	..	16 + "Mating impulse"			15–18 + Adolescence
Age of Problems	16–21		"Coöperative Age"	..	..	..	

[1] Mr. Johnson calls his divisions simply periods 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Johnson separates the third period into two divisions, on the ground that the earlier part is a time of physical setback; and the latter part the height of physical activity. (*Education by Plays and Games*, p. 70.)

[2] Mr. King wisely accents the continuity of growth amid its changes. (*The High School Age*, p. 66.)

[3] *Play in Education*, pp. 40, 41, 42. Mr. Lee here makes overlapping periods.

light, these children are often pale and weak, even when mentally they are driven ahead of their period by the sharp goad of responsibility. It is indeed chiefly responsibility that forces mental and moral development beyond its normal speed. As the Dramatic Age is thrust aside with pathetic haste where a child must not only play child-mother, but *be* one in very truth, so by anxiety and bounden duty the clinging tendrils of romantic youth are jerked off the protecting wall of innocence.

Touchingly Mary Antin describes how her Age of Romance was chilled by poverty: "I awoke on Saturday morning with the no-school feeling; but the grim thing that leaped to its feet and glowered down on me, while the rest of my consciousness was still yawning on its back, was the Mrs.-Hutch-is-coming-and-there's-no-rent feeling. It is hard, if you are a young girl, full of life and inclined to be glad, to go to sleep in anxiety and awake in fear. It is apt to interfere with the circulation of the vital ether of happiness in the young, which is damaging to the complexion of the soul.

"'How old are you?' shouted the irate landlady one day. 'I am seventeen,' I said quickly, 'and I feel like seventy.'"[1]

Fully as important and more mysterious than environment in its effect on growth is *sex*. Boys and girls, as every one knows, choose their own nourishment out

[1] Mary Antin: *The Promised Land*, pp. 310, 317. Houghton Mifflin Company.

of what life brings, and take their own time and speed. Girls often begin the race more quickly, dart ahead, then tire or slacken speed. Boys, moving at first more slowly, appear at a disadvantage until their mental constancy outstrips the more instant sympathies of a girl. Astonishingly unlike are boys and girls, considering that they come of and remain with the same parents, and this in spite of the fact that every parent will recall the girl who ought to have been a boy, or the boy who was meant for a girl. Yet I believe that boys equally with girls pass through the seven epochs I have named, taking one or another more lightly or seriously as they might take measles or vaccination. On the whole, boys and girls are most alike in infancy and in the Angular Age. They differ most at adolescence and in the romantic period between sixteen and eighteen. Interesting photographs of boys and girls at twelve and thirteen are found in Irving King's *The High School Age.*

In addition to the divergencies due to environment and to sex, we have always to remember that *growth* in any child is rarely if ever uniform. I find again and again in children (and I might say in so-called grown-ups) that their growth is uneven. They are mature in some respects and very young in others. It is as when a vine shoots its long spray across your wall to the right while the left side has barely started to grow. So at every period you will find the child whose calendar age covers only a portion of her characteristic age. In one of the large cities of the South I met a subtly beautiful

dark-eyed girl, five feet seven in height, her hair perfectly true to the latest type of Gibson girl. She was rather silent before me. I knew she was at the often melancholy age of thirteen and I thought her silence might mean brooding. I spoke a few sympathetic words on her absence from home. Then at last the fire burned; she spake with her tongue, saying confidentially: "Do you like dolls? I adore them." Whereupon she pulled from her knitting-bag a six-inch doll and its more-than-complete wardrobe, with which she played happily for an hour. She was sixteen in appearance; she was thirteen by the calendar; she was about ten in her tastes. She was fully up to par mentally, but, as happens more often than we realize, one of her branches had not begun to develop.

Lastly we must not forget the charmingly uncharacteristic child who grows up in his or her own way, like the clover with four petals or the robin clad in white. I recall a child who passed through the Dramatic Age with barely a touch on the hem of imagination. Only the intense dramatic instinct of her brother, a year older, gave her even that slipping touch; since he commanded it, she could *act* like a bear, but she carefully presented the explanation to all comers, "We play we are — not really, of course." I also remember a boy who in the most angular moment of the Angular Age would startle you by his gay demonstration of affection, and there are unconfirmed reports of Benedicts who say they never loved in the Age of Romance. Yet how amazingly life

leads us into the familiar, unexpected paths of the race and there leaves us to work out in our special way our own salvation!

When I look down from the lonely height of a platform on a group of students I find myself sometimes murmuring inwardly, "How little you know what life is going to do to you!" Take, for example, the marked difference between the age of five and the age of nine. Daisy Ashford could never have been Opal Whiteley, but neither could Opal have baptized her beloved pig Solomon Grundy in his christening robe of a dish-towel so whole-heartedly at nine as at five.

Because of the swift changes and the pendulum motions in children's lives, parents must be versatile beings. "Always younger than the youngest of her children, more fruitful for what she has spent, more needful for the continued life of the arts than for their inception." [1] This description of religion, the mother of the arts, may well be applied to the daily life of parents. How can we get it?

Youth is the power to enter more gaily, more energetically, and more significantly into the life of your children than they themselves. It is to follow them, or rather to leap before them on their path. There are fathers who are only fathers of the boy of ten. They stare blankly at the baby of two and are irritated by the lad of eighteen. They have not youth enough in them-

[1] William Ernest Hocking: *The Experience of God*, p. 22. Hale University Press.

selves to comprehend more than a single age. There are skilful and tender mothers of infants utterly bewildered by girls of fifteen or by tousled boys of eight. Yet I have known a father who was younger by far than any of his children. I have seen him gay with the Dramatic Age, patient with the Angular Age, tender with the Paradoxical Age, intensely absorbed in the Age of Romance, holding out a quick and steadying hand in the age which falters over its problems. When I think of him I cannot doubt that parents may excel Saint Paul. Saint Paul learned to be all things to all men, but parents have to be all things to all ages — a more intimate and soul-stretching task, since children change more unexpectedly than men.

"Fellow travellers with a bird," Mrs. Meynell calls our relation to children. They never stay in the same spot. We, unwinged mortals, are puzzled by their swift change of place. "It is difficult to cultivate good manners in a child," said a sympathetic mother, "because you never know where you will find his thoughts. He may be deep in constructing an engine, or dreaming of immortality." "To attend to a living child is to be baffled in your humor, disappointed of your pathos, and set freshly free from all preoccupations. You cannot anticipate him." [1] In this sentence I am hit especially by the words, "disappointed of your pathos." Just when you are feeling a bit sentimental, any sensible child may take a realistic view of the state of your countenance

[1] Alice Meynell: *The Children.*

and thereby release you from preoccupation. It is these swift changes of children from hour to hour that make part of the fascination of parenthood. A child is a living language. You can never compass his full meaning. As he changes hour by hour, so will he change with each oncoming era. It is true to say of the seven ages of childhood that each expresses rebirth — a new child to know. The mother must watch for the new in her child. She must, in Josiah Royce's penetrating phrase, "expect constantly the unexpected." She must know that because every child is more than the child of his parents, it is both easy and dangerous to say, "That boy is exactly like his father," and stop there. For if anything is certain it is that he is different, a new being. Likeness, our great clue to guidance, our steadying sail in a tossing world, must be supplemented by the faith that every child is also unique, himself and not another.

Since with each new period there is a somewhat different child to encircle and to comprehend, a new problem hits us with a sharp thong just as we have settled peaceably and foolishly down to self-satisfaction with our old solution. "I never knew him act like this before." Of course not. The thud of the apple's fall in autumn is not like the floating silence of the blossom's petals in spring. We must let our thoughts grow with our children, enlarging *ourselves* to meet their new life. There is far more acute danger that *we* shall not grow large enough to meet their new needs, than that they will be dwarfed.

We must renew our youth like the eagle's. We must, like the eagle, sweep up toward the sun and find our youth in that splendor of light. When I look into children's eyes my rushing desire is not to lose one iota of the new contribution each one of them has to give. The spring of dauntless feet up craggy rocks, the joy in chasing sea-foam, the commanding will that orders us all to its service, the unconventioned eyes that can see stars in icy trees, the straight-spoken word that does not evade or evolve — we need these; they must not be lost.

To lead children without injury along the paths that the world follows, is as difficult as to train the human voice without sacrificing its unconsciousness. Reverence is the better part of education, reverence so strong, so austere and so loving that it clears away whatever obscures a child's true nature, as we would sweep away the rubbish and dirt that block the portal of a cathedral — reverence so tender that it shelters and suns any tendril of good.

For my own justification in collecting these studies of childhood and in following them, as I hope soon to do, by a book on *The Conquest of Children's Faults*, I can only quote the humorous words of a sagacious mother: "Parents need a consulting psychologist who is helped by the perspective of distance to see more clearly at times than they. Then there are aunts," she added; "they can help. There is the indulgent aunt and the instructive aunt and the censorious aunt. We need every

one of them. But best of all there is the encouraging aunt. She is a wonderful help; when I was most in despair about the boys, she was sure that their physical laziness meant power for mental work, and their obstinacy, independence of judgment. Parents need about ten different kinds of people to bring their children up."

True, and among these ten is a group too often forgotten. Children bring themselves up, they bring one another up, they are brought up by that stern master responsibility, by the wooing of friendship and by the guidance of God. As good gardeners, we watch, support, water, weed, prune, let in sun. But we know that their life is in themselves, not in us. Wisely they reject our clumsy guidance, steer by instinct, and find freedom in helping us.

In earlier writings I have accented all too much the help we can give to children. Yet I am far more conscious of the lessons that they are daily teaching us, and I have written this book mainly because I want to share with others what I have learnt from children.

BOOK ONE

BABYHOOD: THE DEPENDENT AGE

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CHAPTER I

THE ROMANCE OF PHYSICAL SERVICE

ONE autumn morning as I was walking past an old farmhouse in the country my little niece and nephew came rushing after me. "The black horse has tumbled down and cracked his nose," they announced breathlessly, "and there's a new baby in the farmhouse." They were decidedly clear that the horse's adventure was the more important, but since I seemed to want to hear about the baby they went on to tell me that it was a girl. "And I saw the angel flying across the fields, bringing it from heaven," said Harold, aged five. As he was a naturally truthful child, I saw that he did not want to be pressed for further details. I did not question his statement, for I thought it truer than he knew. An angel *was* bringing the baby, for with it came a fresh awareness of the holiness, the mystery, the flying beauty of each new child — our child, yet so much more than ours. If romantic tales of storks and angels enshroud the baby's birth, it is as much from a desire to reveal as from a desire to conceal. Birth is an unending marvel. Angels and magi are needed to chant it. "This is the

perpetual romance of new life, the invasion of God into the old dead world, when he sends into quiet houses a young soul with a thought which is not met, looking for something which is not there, but ought to be there." [1]

Like all good romance, the romance of new life is blended of laughter, awe, adventure, and service. Fathers especially are much surprised, amused, and upset by the coming of anything so helpless and so exigent:

"There came to port last Sunday night
The queerest little craft,
Without an inch of rigging on;
I looked and looked and laughed.
It seemed so curious that she
Should cross the Unknown water,
And moor herself right in my room,
My daughter, O my daughter!

. . . .

"Ring out, wild bells, and tame ones too!
Ring out the lover's moon!
Ring in the little worsted socks!
Ring in the bib and spoon!
Ring out the muse! ring in the nurse!
Ring in the milk and water!
Away with paper, pen and ink —
My daughter, O my daughter!" [2]

Thus with gleeful awe fathers may receive babies, but mothers are too busy to be often amused. Their opportunity as I want to write of it here is threefold: Service; study and record; training.

The first months of a baby's life must be for his

[1] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Education." Vol. x of Emerson's *Complete Works*, Riverside Edition.
[2] George W. Cable, *A New Arrival.*

mother times of repeated routine physical care; but all lovers know that physical care is the source of romance. As a mother's love flows into menial service, her service, fountain-like, springs up into new love. "He needs me," and "I love him," have the same sound as she speaks them. "I take care of the baby" means in the double sense of the word, "I *care* for him." I knew once a Scotch woman who had to leave her own babies with their grandmother in order to earn money by taking care of a large family of rich boys and girls. "I did not love Tom and Helen at first," she said; "my heart was always turning back to my own children, but after I'd tubbed them and shampooed them a great many times, I just could n't help getting fond of them."

Even flowers answer our devotion and win our love as they blossom under our hand. How much more children woven of body and spirit. If you've once had babies to tend, your hands ache for chances of serving them whenever you are away. Physical, even menial, service becomes in the presence of love a link between heaven and earth. It is what George Meredith called a *Reading of Earth*, an entrance into its language. Lowly physical service passing joyously through grime and drudgery is in part an expression of love's unquenchable humility. Love, that seeks danger to express itself, seeks also the meanest tasks; they can hardly be sordid enough to express its unworthiness. Instinctively it seeks earth and lowly acts. "The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose," John the Baptist says

foreseeing the Christ. For love is overwhelmed by its blessings and must seek both what is difficult and what is subordinate. It expresses itself through the perilous, it gives what is most costly, but it longs also to express itself in humble devotion. "She hath anointed my feet with oil and wiped them with the hairs of her head." The penances of monks and saints, their dirt and strain and grovelling toil, the tasks that left them hideous, begrimed, deformed, were grotesque efforts to express the humility of love.

But the service of love springs not alone from the great passion of atonement for unworthiness. It expresses the necessity to translate love into immediate action. Our one word *devotion* in its double meaning gives the whole scale from consecration through worship into ardent untiring action. Devotion is all of these. It is prayer; it is commitment; it is service to the uttermost. In ancient liturgies there is no separation between meditation and action. The prayers are a service, the acts of kneeling and bowing the head are worship. Those who love God or man love not only with mind and heart, but with their strength. We want to give *all* of ourselves, muscle and thought and springing feet. "I kept thy tent like a linnet's nest," speaks Synge's exquisite heroine. Her love like all love wants what is concrete, something in particular here and now. It demands incessant *tests* and trials, not words alone, though it have the tongue of men and angels, but common deeds, a cup of cold water, the binding-up of

wounds. It must give the whole of itself, hands and feet, eyes and hearing. Through its littlest deeds, as in the smallest pool the sun can find to shine on, the symbolism of love utters itself. Those who love ascend and descend the lighted ladder from highest heaven to the common earth.

When Jesus knew that his hour was come he did not say a final word or do a crowning miracle. Any one of us would struggle for some worthy expression of our faith, knowing that it was our last word, our supreme act. But Christ put his love into a deed of tender humility. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God" — in the face of that stupendous vision of reality — "he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." Picture the parched Eastern land; the begrimed, travel-stained feet of peasants. Jesus, facing a death of agony, his soul flooded with desire for the coming of the Kingdom of God, chooses a deed of humility and cleansing. "What I do, ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter." [1]

What mothers do their children never know — they take the utmost sacrifice blessedly for granted — far more than *granted*, outpoured. "Of the many ways of love, one of the dearest is to serve in silence — celebrate

[1] John XIII.

and not be found out. Mothering is a great business just on those lines. The bairns never guess or care how many myriad thoughts of love go into bed-making or hair-brushing. You've got the drop on them all the time." Physical service to babies is its own reward, my friend meant. To have babies know of the daily labor or be grateful for it would be abhorrent, like being paid for smiling, or thanked for running to meet a friend.

Apart from the power of service to the body through tender care, mothers have from the outset the power of service to all other mothers through careful record of a baby's development, and of the needs and fulfilments of its dawning life. These records, if accurate and detailed, will be of value even though they are the records of only one or two children—for, as Millicent Shinn wisely says, the baby is so busy getting into line with the common racial acts of seeing, grasping, walking, talking, chuckling, that he is more typical and less individual than older children are. It is an astonishing experience, once you realize it, to find that babies who are apparently asleep two thirds of the time, and drinking a large part of the rest, do more and learn more during these first years than any of us complacent adults in an equal time. Fully to appreciate this fact we must realize where babies start.

The trouble with most theory about children is that we put *ourselves* in their place, our tall, sophisticated, worldly-wise, cautious selves, in the place of their tiny, unprejudiced, imprudent selves. "If you paint a birch-

tree you must be a birch-tree," said a wise French painter. That is a far more subtle affair than to put yourself in the place of a birch-tree. Of course I can put myself in the place of a birch-tree; I can wave my arms in the breeze and unloose whatever hair I possess to simulate flower tassels. But that is not being even remotely a birch-tree. It is a crude caricature. Never can I be a birch-tree or a baby. But through memory, keen in its scent, through faithful imagination, through expectant and delicate watching, I can draw infancy back into my mind, incomplete, indeed, but genuine. In this chapter I hope I may give some clues, some hooks as it were on which every mother may hang her new discoveries in the ancient world of infancy. Let me begin at the beginning. By comparing the studies of a number of writers on babyhood, we get a partial picture of a newborn infant's world. Miss Millicent Shinn gives one of the best interpretations:

"Here is the conception I gathered of the dim life on which the little creature entered at birth. She took in with a dull comfort the gentle light that fell on her eyes, seeing without any sort of attention or comprehension the moving blurs of darkness that varied it. She felt motions and changes; she felt the action of her own muscles; and, after the first three or four days, disagreeable shocks of sound now and then broke through the silence, or perhaps through an unnoticed jumble of noises. She felt touches on her body from time to time, but without the least sense of the place of the touch (this becomes

evident enough later, as I shall relate in its order); and steady light sensations of touch from her clothes, from arms that held her, and from cushions on which she lay, poured in on her.

"From time to time sensations of hunger, thirst, and once or twice of pain, made themselves felt through all the others, and mounted until they became distressing; from time to time a feeling of heightened comfort flowed over her, as hunger and thirst were satisfied, or release from clothes, and the effect of the bath and rubbing on her circulation, increased the net sense of well-being. She felt slight and unlocated discomforts from fatigue in one position, quickly relieved by the watchful nurse. For the rest, she lay empty-minded, consciously comfortable or uncomfortable, yet on the whole pervaded with a dull sense of well-being. Of the people about her, of her mother's face, of her own existence, of desire or fear, she knew nothing.

"Yet this dim dream was flecked all through with the beginnings of later comparison and choice. The light was varied with dark; the feelings of passive motion, of muscular action, of touch, of sound, were all unlike each other; the discomforts of hunger, of pain, of fatigue, were different discomforts. The baby began from the first moment to accumulate varied experience, which before long would waken attention, interest, discrimination, and vivid life." [1]

[1] Millicent W. Shinn, *The Biography of a Baby*, pp. 55–57. Houghton Mifflin Company.

You notice in this careful description with how narrow a range of interests and powers the baby starts. For some months babies cannot judge the direction of sound. Their sight for weeks is imperfect because their eyes do not know completely how to focus or to judge of distance. Babies under four months are almost unaware of the possibilities of hands. They use the tongue for touching and the lips for holding. They seem to have little idea of color; though they early love light and bright surfaces, it often takes three or four years for them to match or to name colors correctly.

Babies have very little sense of space. They rarely look up. Their eyes are on the lowly things of earth. They are so small themselves that distance in any object means lack of interest. They are of course for years absolutely devoid of our large interests in other places and countries. Their *sense of time* is very small. We hold our lives together by the thought of the past and the hopes of the future. Babies under three have very little of either. Memory in them is quickly dimmed, attention is brief and easily tired. And of the arts of managing their body Perez says somewhat disparagingly: "A cat at a month old will better use its paws for standing, walking, seizing, or playing than a year-old child will use its hands and legs for the same purpose." [1]

These facts of limited power in every direction, joined

[1] Perez, *The First Three Years of Childhood*, p. 17; trans. by Alice Christie.

as they are to the greater fact that babies are gaily setting forth to overcome all difficulties, marching like the Israelites into the Promised Land, make the study of the first year peculiarly interesting. Any of us would be thrilled to see how a blind child suddenly restored to sight views the world of light and color. Books have been written about him, and people have travelled far to study his first impressions of the visible universe. But in every baby born into the world we have a more wonderful revelation. For though he starts with a mysterious power of inheritance behind him and in him, yet he has the entire universe to discover and interpret and his mother (endowed almost invariably with the magic gift of persistence) has the joy of rediscovering it with him. At birth, says the somewhat humorless German student of psychology, Preyer, a baby can grasp, swallow, cry, kick, and before long, yawn! A good outfit for a world trip, but it needs supplementation. In what way does he enter the trackless and dazzling forest? By touch first of all, the earliest touch of nature, and by the instinct of sucking, which he shares with all the little animals of field and forest: yet even in this he is far less perfect than they.

"I had thought," writes a young mother, "that children would know instinctively how to eat. But instead — the nurse had to try again and again to show him how. I shall never forget her sunny little voice, 'Open mouth, honey-boy, open little mouth,' and even when she got her finger in — no! he would not suck it!

So after several trials she arranged his little head very comfortably in the right position and let him go to sleep with me; and suddenly he woke, and in drawing in his breath — the inspiration came to him! He understood what all the awkward fumbling had meant, and like a little whirlwind he flew to work."

CHAPTER II

THE GREATEST YEAR — THE FIRST

STARTING then with the ability to grasp, suck, sneeze, swallow, cry, kick, hiccough, and yawn, what important advances do babies make during the first year? These:

Course A. Advanced seeing.

Course B. Acoustics: Hearing; tracking and making sounds.

Course C. Inference, Comparison, and Memory: a difficult course!

Course D. Language.

Course E. Fine Arts I, the Art of Play.

Course F. Applied Ethics.

I will now follow the trend of these courses, most of which are begun at once, but a few in the second half-year.

Course A. Seeing, in any worthy sense, is an acquired art. The baby has to learn to *focus objects*, to *distinguish them*, to identify color and form, to appreciate distances. Even the lids need training. Opening both eyes at once is not the easy task we think it. Observers agree that inexperienced babies of a month old often get one eye open and one shut quite unintentionally, with no desire to wink, but because their eyelids do not always obey the word of command.[1] Nor do two eyes

[1] W. Preyer, *The Mind of the Child*, p. 22; trans. by H. W. Brown.

always agree as to where they want to look. The left eye knoweth not what the right eye doeth. Looking up, down, and to the side are arts to be learned; eyeballs are not easily turned. Like a horse in blinders, the baby of a few weeks sees only straight before him and then but to a short distance and in relation to bright or to slow-moving objects. A swift movement, like the flight of a swallow, escapes his leisurely muscles and attention. It is only bit by bit that babies are able to put together the scene that surrounds them. Their world has at the outset no form, no solidity, no perspective. It may well be like a flat painting not too accurately drawn, a painting into which the bright mosaic colors, red and yellow, first catch the little fellow as early as at four months.[1]

Recognition, involving memory as well as sight, must be gradually acquired. We have few positive clues in the wordless time of infancy, but the baby observed by M. Cuignet is said to have recognized his mother by definite and smiling attention as early as the second month.[2] Most mothers would fix an earlier date. By four or five months the proper kind of person is clearly distinguished from the wrong kind by every normal and judicial baby. It takes, however, still several years to get any clear idea of distance; strange that we ever learn it! A child of one year grasped diligently at the lamp on the ceiling of a railroad car and was much provoked not to get it.

[1] See G. Compayré, *L'Evolution Intellectuelle et Morale de l'Enfant*, p. 61. Libraire Hachette. Paris, 1893.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

A child of twenty-two months tried to throw himself into his father's arms from a second-story window.[1]

Even at the advanced age of three and a half a maiden had genuine hopes of getting the moon when first she saw it on a summer's night:

"What's that up there, mother?"

"It's the moon, darling."

"Will you get it for me? I'm not tall enough."

"No, dear, I could n't reach it either."

"Well!" (philosophically) "I guess it's pasted on, anyway."

So *perspective* — and the right interpretation of what they see — eludes little people. Yet are we grown-ups relatively much more enlightened? How little we see of the objects before us! Still more, how little do we interpret of their myriad meanings! Blind are we when judged by the keen eyes of the artist and the piercing vision of the saint. After all, were it not for our second-hand information, many of us might think we could reach the moon in a day's journey. The cow, we were once told, jumped over it.

Course B. Hearing and making sounds. The acquirement of average, passable *hearing* is simple enough compared to the intricate art of learning to see. Mechanical deafness disappears usually by the fourth day and soon fear and pleasure develop round the sounds of the world — those sounds that are for most of life our joy or pain. Even in the first week, writes Darwin, the baby

[1] W. Preyer, *The Mind of the Child*, I, p. 56.

trembled at harsh sounds and the parental sneeze was a source of vivid distress at two months. Doddy did not get over the nervous effects for an hour. But sounds are also a joy, from a month on. Singing begins to be a source of peace, and, by two months or earlier, baby feet dance to the piano gaily. It seems probable, says Compayré, that a child knows the voice of his mother before he knows her by sight.[1] Knowledge of direction of sound is a later art; perhaps largely because direction does not interest the baby. Preyer traces as an early case the turning of a child at eleven weeks to hear a voice behind him; by the sixteenth week the sense of direction is reflex. He affirms that during the first year hearing counts far more to babies than even seeing. Both Preyer and Perez report by the second month lively satisfaction and laughter with quick cessation of cries, when music is heard. "By six months," declares Preyer, proudly, "my child uttered a joyous cry at military music. The first sound produced by himself that gave the child evident satisfaction was the crumpling of a sheet of paper. He often indulged in this, especially in his fifth month."[2]

And here we see that babies pass rapidly from exultant enjoyment of sounds to the finer art of *making* a noise, which in pedagogic slang, may be termed "self-activity." Parents who have a dull preference for quiet should yet recognize that making a noise is one of the

[1] *L'Evolution Intellectuelle*, p. 183.
[2] W. Preyer, *The Mind of the Child*, I, p. 85.

baby's earliest and also, to some people's regret, one of his most persistent creative acts. There is not, at his limited age of six months or less, very much that he can create; but making a noise is always possible. Apart from utilitarian noises like howling for food, most babies begin playful sound-making by the middle of the first three months.

When the baby has learned the fun of lying on his back and making gurgles, it soon becomes a grand spree, and joins itself to the primitive effort of making bubbles without soap. "His latest happiness," a gay mother writes, "is the discovery of an interesting little flood of enchanting liquid in his throat. (It is saliva — but it is a great thing, he thinks, for a person who must spend so many hours on his back!) I wish you could hear the delicate little balancing of bubbles that goes on far down in his throat. It is too sensitively rippling a thing to speak of as 'gargling.' I can copy most of his sounds (much to his amusement), but not this little liquid rilling of contentment, that he has perfected during all those half-hours of lying alone. And he can do more than this with his wonderful saliva. When his father or a very few others that he particularly likes come near, he finds that he can blow out a wonderful explosion of this new discovery — with so superb a splutter that it gives a *nearly* adequate expression to his sense of welcome."

Another and very different acquisition made by babies in the first eighteen months is the power to distinguish

and recognize objects. It is hard for adults to realize that little babies do not distinguish clearly between what is their private property in body and what is an outside object. This difficulty may last long. Preyer's baby of nineteen months was asked to give his shoe to his father. He, Axel, obeyed. "Now give me your foot," said the father, wishing to put on the shoe. Thereupon the generous baby tried hard but unsuccessfully to pull off his own foot and present it to the grasping parent.[1]

Course C. Comparison. Perez thinks babies distinguish people or things long before they begin to compare them, for to distinguish is simply to recognize each separately, to compare is to realize that there are two of a kind yet not the same, a far more philosophical conclusion. Perez tried offering a baby girl of three months two feeding bottles, one empty, one full. She seized both and lifted the empty one to her lips. Great disappointment ensued and she let it drop and began to cry. Soon, however, she felt or bethought her of the full bottle in her right hand and sucked it with joy.

Perez gives another example at eight months. A little boy was given a gray cat to play with. While he was exulting over it and squeezing it vigorously, a second gray cat appeared purring on his other side. Poor baby seemed overwhelmed with the duality of gray cats. It took him some time, apparently, to believe in a world where such puzzling facts existed. But after frequent comparison he happily accepted both cats, having

[1] W. Preyer, *The Mind of the Child*, II, p. 190.

apparently made for himself the discovery of likeness and difference.[1] From fifteen months on to two years, children are much interested in comparison (Perez thinks) especially that they may find resemblances between things.[2]

It is natural enough that comparison should be slow in arising, for children's attention and memory are both short-lived and the great mines of treasure to be dug from penetrative comparison require a vigorous mental pickaxe. As early as eight weeks the desire to compare two faces (decidedly a difficult task when lying on one's back) came to Miss Shinn's niece. She looked definitely and repeatedly first at her aunt and then at her mother. It seems a simple act, yet it involves great issues; for there can be no definite comparison until memory is strong enough to hold the two faces, and out of the treasury of memory come all the pearls for which, throughout life, we dive into our past.

Have you noticed how intent and constant is this love of comparison in little babies? When they themselves can run on nimble feet it often dies away, but comparison is the early delighted running of their minds to and fro. I wore a moonstone necklace, my sister an amethyst. Baby, too young to speak, gloated over both, not for mean possession, but for comparison of their charms. With her face wreathed in smiles she turned from one to the other, touched each necklace gently, thought in-

[1] B. Perez, *The First Three Years of Childhood*, pp. 191, 193, and 195.
[2] *Ibid.*

stantly of the alternative one and called to it with cheery grunts. Likeness and difference! The most learned philosopher does not outgrow the study of the relation of these which the babe of two months begins to distinguish.

Course D. Language. Thrilling to watch as are the baby's first marches across space, even more so are his excursions into *language*, for organized speech is a *human* masterpiece, not elsewhere attained. Birds and insects may jeer at our clumsy efforts to fly, lions at our lack of muscle, fishes and seals at our absurd and labored swimming, but in varied and significant speaking we still take the prize. Babies begin to compare before they reach their full equipment of speech, but they begin learning how to speak just after birth. They are continuously practising sounds and exercising throat muscles by every cry. Before long comes a far more significant stage in which they make sounds not in a utilitarian spirit but for the joy of sound-making. Guttural sounds from the throat and larynx come first. Romanes tells us that the lips and tongue are less instinctive or harder to manage. Miss Shinn's niece, as early as the fourth month, amused herself by the half-hour in making sounds some of which evidently startled her by coming out quite different from what she had planned.

After having played gaily with their own sounds, babies begin to respond to noises heard; but definite copying of sounds repeated to them is a relatively late

accomplishment. It seems established by the studies of many keen observers that babies *invent* sounds before they imitate them. The impulse to try on sounds and see how they behave, comes months earlier than the power or the desire to copy sounds. Indeed, babies often seem bored or annoyed at being asked to repeat sounds long after they can easily do so. Even Preyer's son, a very storm centre of experiment, refused for eleven months to repeat any sounds suggested to him. He was quite contented with his own vocabulary and gradually standardized certain simple monosyllables.

As a stage accompanying the early beginnings of speech comes the power to *understand* at least a part of language, to obey definite orders, to come at a call, to wait when reassured that food is on its way. Most of us can understand a new language long before we can speak it well. So with every child. He must overcome inertia, difficulty and shyness before he will protrude his queerly articulated language into the world. And to save his face he begins with gestures, shaking his head, turning brusquely away from undesired food, waving good-bye, pointing to the door to be taken out.

But, whether they intend it or not, babies are destined to learn our language. Sociability is too strong to be ignored. The most timid traveller in a foreign country will, ere long, venture out into a few words. Babies learn to speak words partly by adopting sounds of their own and giving them a meaning, partly by pure imitation. Their invention of words has three possibilities: (1) that

they make up sounds hereafter attached to special meanings by their adoring parents; (2) that they invent both sound and meaning; and (3) that they alter for their own purposes the signification of words or sounds which they have heard.

Compayré, following Preyer, Taine, and others, suggests that the words "papa" and "mama" have been invented by babies in many lands, and then adopted by parents for their own.

"These primitive syllables, *pa-pa*, *ma-ma*, *tata* and *apa*, *ama*, *ata*, originate of themselves when in the expiration of breath the passage is stopped either by the lips (*p*, *m*) or by the tongue (*d*, *t*); but after they have been already uttered many times with ease, without meaning, at random, the mothers of all nations make use of them to designate previously existing ideas of the child, and designate by them what is most familiar."[1] Henceforth, since these sounds are early and easy, all parents can proudly assert that the baby speaks their name first.

Whether the baby invents both sound and meaning seems doubtful. Taine says that a baby he observed applied the special sound "am" for food.[2] But other babies have different sounds, "nana" and "mini," and it seems possible that these are but abridgements of words they have heard, "am" for "pain" (bread), "mini" for "milch." Preyer thinks no baby invents both

[1] W. Preyer, *The Mind of the Child*, II, 86.

[2] Horatio Hale, Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, vol. XXXV. 1886.

sound and meaning. But listen as the baby hears a really fascinating voice, a pig, a cuckoo, an engine. Imitation is quick and the association may remain constant.[1] Two examples, one of twins who invented and talked together a language incomprehensible to their parents; another of a little girl who used a language of her own and taught it to her younger brother, seem to suggest that children in some cases may invent language.[1]

Certainly they change the meaning of words. "Ban" (="bang" of a rifle shot, I suppose) to an English baby started by meaning a soldier, but seeing a bishop with a mitre he also became a "ban"; a duck on the water was "coin" (quack). Henceforth all birds and all liquids, all insects and even all coins with eagles on them became "coin."[2] Language has to be stretched; babies have n't enough to go round, and, being happy-go-lucky, they see likeness where we are intent on difference. I recall one baby who, out of my dull words, "These will *do for* playthings," constructed an entirely new and interesting character, a "dofor." "Oh! yes," she squealed. "Two nice little dofors. Where are your dofors? Can you find another dofor?"

Babies being limited in vocabulary not only change the meaning of words. They must think without words. As the musician thinks in his chords, the painter in his colors, the algebraist in his symbols, so the baby under one year shows us his thinking through his acts. He

[1] See Compayré, *L'Evolution Intellectuelle*, p. 242.

[2] Darwin, quoted by Compayré, *L'Evolution Intellectuelle*, p. 244.

recognizes and smiles at his mother; he points to the door, begging wordlessly to be taken out; he urges by cries and gestures that his bottle should be given him; he shrieks at seeing his mother leave the room. Preyer [1] gives an interesting example of reasoning in a baby of under eleven months. "The child struck several times with a spoon upon a plate. It happened accidentally, while he was doing this, that he touched the plate with the hand that was free; the sound was dulled and the child noticed the difference. He now took the spoon in his other hand, struck with it on the plate, dulled the sound again, and so on. In the evening the experiment was renewed with a like result."

Some of the thoughts of infants are, it would seem, quite definite though wordless. But as sociability increases babies come to see that it is largely expressed in talk. Josephine, at two years, has a hampering limit of vocabulary and a luxuriant desire for conversation. With dramatic gestures, high interrogative tones, and the grandiose language of Lear's nonsense book, she lets out her enticing ideas. She easily copies any word we say, but while she craves the fullest comradeship she is not especially interested in learning our language. Her own flow of soul tides her over bare places. "Good mornink," she murmurs; but that would satisfy no sociable spirit, and with rippling onrush of unknown words she lets the floodgate loose, ending quite connectedly with "How d'y do?"

[1] *The Mind of the Child*, I, p. 87.

Babies are accused by the learned Aristotle of calling all men fathers and mothers. They have to, poor dears. With limited vocabulary, plus the desire to talk, goes necessarily the use of the same word for many meanings. We are baffled in describing a new sight when we do not know the language. Jeannie (in camp, though just three) was delighted with the sunbeams reflected on the tent wall from the lake below. She had no words for them; she could only gurgle and point. And where definite communication was imperative she must use well-worn words. "Cherry" meant indifferently grape, plum, or barberry; anything round and detachable from a stem. The first fly she noticed in a well-regulated fly-swatting family where flies were few, was to my surprise a "cherry" also. She had been by the lake all summer, and on seeing a moth-miller he instantly was denominated a "fish." In the picture book of wild animals choices had to be made; a buffalo was a nice doggie, a seal, which I had called a fish, was to Jeannie a bird. Not very different, after all, from our practical use of hairpins as glove-buttoners or paper-cutters, when nothing else is handy.

Yet I am struck with the greater reaches of definiteness and of sociability that come with a common language; for language in a magical way clears and enlarges ideas. The special name concentrates attention and points out distinctions. When you know that a wolf is not just a badly drawn doggie, you begin to notice character marks in the wolf. In spite of Romeo and

Juliet there's a good deal in a name. It's a vessel ready to receive the new. Kathleen, at twenty-two months, gained suddenly the power of making sentences; in two weeks came a marvellous enlargement of speech, and *with speech new comradeship.* Her beloved book she looks at now not only to see a boy and a piggie, but to trace new species; lions and foxes begin to be distinguished, first by name and then by sight from the generic doggie. With speech in sentences seems to come, too, a new enlargement of plans and the delicious dawnings of the idea of work. She helps me mend her wooden cage, finding a stick to hold together the upper and lower frame. "Aunt Ella fix it," first, and then baby proceeds to spend hours fixing and unfixing with equally devoted zeal, murmuring delightedly as she thrusts in the little stick: — "Hard, very hard."

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF PLAY

Course E. Fine Arts I. A baby's toys are the accessible universe. He includes sunbeams and mudpies with equal joy, for to the baby, as to the scientist and the saint, naught is common or unclean. During the first weeks babies accept like millionaires the luxuries that come their way — smooth, luscious milk, voices that make alluring sounds, exciting spots of light, the play of sun and shadow, release from restraining clothes that allows a sturdier kick, warm and soothing baths, large, bright, moonlike faces bending above them. But as the days go on it is interesting to trace babies' four great sources of pleasure — through touch, sight, hearing, and above all through motion. Smell is ignored. Any sensible baby opens its mouth at the approach of a hyacinth.

Touch is an early joy. The fingers and lips of babies of a few months old feel their way inquiringly and caressingly into the world. In the second half-year a child handles everything within reach including his own soft body. Strumpell's baby at ten months discovered her ear with such excitement that she tried to pull it off.[1] Thumb-sucking is as common among babies as

[1] L. Strumpell, *Psychologische Pädagogik*, 359, 360; quoted by Groos, *The Play of Man*, p. 8.

marbles among street urchins. Whether it's a game or whether it's as serious as smoking and as difficult to get over, I leave to the babies to tell.

Next to touch the baby's earliest discovery is perhaps that of the charm of light. Careful observers, from the thorough and determined Preyer, who dragged his infant to the window at the age of five minutes, to the gay and sympathetic Millicent Shinn, have studied the baby's reaction to light. All of them notice, from fourteen days on, the joy of little babies in bright candles or reflected light. The eyes rest contentedly then, instead of wandering. Preyer's child, trained early by a persistently experimental father, followed with his eyes on the twenty-third day the changes in place of a slowly moving candle; Miss Shinn's niece did so on the thirty-first. From the third week light, if not too sudden or glaring, seems to give pleasure. Raehlmann gives five weeks as about the time a baby can *fix* his eyes on an object, but not till the fifth month does he learn how to track down an escaping object or catch, by turning his head, what he sees out of the corner of his eye.[1] "In his second month the infant will break into joyful cries at the sight of gilded picture frames or lighted lamps, illuminated Christmas trees, or shining mirrors." [2]

Sully's baby at seven weeks "acquired a fondness for a cheap, showy card with crudely brilliant coloring and

[1] E. Raehlmann, *Physiol-psychol. Studien über die Entwickelung der Gesichtswahrnehmung bei Kindern*, etc., vol. II, p. 69. (Quoted by Karl Groos, *The Play of Man*, p. 48.)

[2] W. Preyer, *The Development of the Senses and Will.*

gilded border. When carried to the place where it hung, . . . he would look up to it and greet his first love in the world of art with a pretty smile. . . . He soon got to know the locality of some of his favorite works of art, and to look out expectantly, when taken into the right room, for his daily show."[1] Sigismund writes of his little daughter of nine months: "The child is now passionately fond of light, and in the evening when the darkened room is lighted up, she regularly shouts aloud and dances for joy."[2]

Millicent Shinn, one of the best equipped observers of a single child, tells us that her niece between the third and fourth month delighted in bright yellow chrysanthemums, in a knot of red ribbon, in shadows from a lighted chandelier quivering on the ceiling, the white fluttering leaves of a notebook, an eyeglass. But, as writes Miss Shinn, the baby loved glitter and chiaroscuro earlier and more than color.[3] This love of light is deep and constant in all times and nations: even the deer is lured from shyness by the light of a lantern. From the millionaire craving jewels to the urchin chuckling over the sparkle of a rocket, we all share the same love of light. Milton can hardly face his long life with light dimmed, and the most wonderful title bestowed on the Redeemer is that of "Light of the World." "This is

[1] James Sully, *Extracts from a Father's Diary*, pp. 403 and 409, in *Studies of Childhood.*

[2] Sigismund, *Kind und Welt*, p. 58, quoted by Groos, *The Play of Man*, p. 50.

[3] Millicent Shinn, *Notes on the Development of a Child.* Published by the University of California.

the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

Since babies are catholic in their enjoyment, if they have the wrong toys it must be the fault of their parents. Any baby easily becomes a candidate for candy and makes moving political outcries therefor; but a wooden spoon and a tin can suit him just as well and have more varied uses. Babies in any surroundings look about to see what is profitable for their purposes — peach-bloom vases, pearl necklaces, pink pills — it is all one to them. That is why babies are fascinating. They think of our time-honored possessions in entirely original terms; but because this originality of interpretation is often inconvenient, it behooves parents to establish right surroundings.

First of all in importance is the limitation of space. The world is large to young explorers and tempts to danger and dissipation of energy. Therefore the "pen" becomes a centre of right living.

"At this time of life I think the most useful adjunct of the baby's existence is a pen — not to write with but to live in. Certainly in my own experience I have found that the pen is mightier than the nurse — at least in producing a contented mind. Ours was five feet square by twenty-six inches high, a good height to stand and hold on by and to shake. It had a bottom of some waterproof material, buttoned on at the corners, that was good after a rain, especially on grass, and

made it easier to move all one's worldly possessions at once.

"The pen has a most interesting psychological effect in the direction of contentment. Children seem willing to spend hours and hours playing in it when they will soon get fussy if left outside. Often even after a child, who has been running all over the playground or the room, has already become tired and cross, he will, if taken up and put inside the pen, quiet down and play contentedly, singing to himself. There is evidently something about an insuperable, and therefore accepted, limitation that is very soothing to the childish mind. I suppose the reason is in the need of the simplification, simple life, of escape from a maddening crowd and a plethora of resources, of retiring to one's country house. The feeling is the same that, as reported by William James, has driven many weary souls to seek the monastery; the desire to escape confusion and attain simplicity at any cost. Also you can look the other way, and know that he will not kill himself before you can look back." [1]

The pen is, of course, a physical barrier that babies recognize, but even a symbolic barrier, like the little rugs that Madame Montessori gives each child to range his games upon, seems to have a quality of identifying space. Inside the pen must be the proper kind of toys, characterized on the negative side as being non-

[1] Joseph Lee, *The Home Playground*, p. 5. Playground Association of America, 1 Madison Avenue, New York.

breakable, non-swallowable, inexpensive, washable, and replaceable.

Later than play in babies and far more intricately human is *humor*. It is often difficult to distinguish pure joy, bubbling over, from a sense of the humorous. Babies laugh for joy; grown-ups rarely do. We laugh at jokes, at surprises, at triumphs; we laugh for scorn, we laugh to be in the game; but rarely do we laugh for pure delight. Yet baby, running into the dining-room after her noonday nap, stands quite still, laughing and laughing again, apparently not with humor, but for pure joy in the combination of many nice folks. How shall we distinguish humor from such an overflow of joy?

Humor, the most subtle and fascinating characteristic of man, seems to pivot on expectation and surprise. Something we expect turns out strange, something visible vanishes and returns suddenly, something familiar is strangely dressed. If it is something we dread to keep or dread to lose, the vanishing and return may waken nothing but fear. The coming and going of a ghost or a lion is not funny but terrible. I 've seen a baby scream with horror at seeing his mother dive into the lake. But where reassurance is quick and counted on, vanishing and return, strangeness mingled with familiarity, are wholly, delightfully funny.

One lover children have had, herself tender, subtle, delicate, observing, humor-loving enough to catch and pinion in living language their evanescent, opalescent,

lilting gaiety. "The infant of months is still too young to be gay. A child's mirth, when at last it begins, is his first secret; you understand little of it. The first smile (for the convulsive movement in sleep that is popularly adorned by that name is not a smile) is an uncertain sketch of a smile, unpractised but unmistakable. It is accompanied by a single sound — a sound that would be monosyllable if it were articulate — which is the utterance, though hardly the communication, of a private jollity. That and that alone is the real beginning of human laughter. From the end of the first fortnight of life, when it appears for the first time, and as it were flickeringly, the child's smile begins to grow definite and, gradually, more frequent. By very slow degrees the secrecy passes away, and the dryness becomes more genial. The child now smiles more openly, but he is still very unlike the laughing creature of so much prose and verse. His laughter takes a long time to form. The monosyllable grows louder, and then comes to be repeated with little catches of the breath. The humor upon which he learns to laugh is that of something that approaches him quickly and then withdraws. This is the first intelligible jest of jesting man." [1]

All writers on babyhood agree with Mrs. Meynell that among humorous games, peek-a-boo has an acknowledged priority; peek-a-boo is approach and withdrawal, reality vanishing and returning. Peek-a-boo is usually enjoyed by the sixth month. Darwin's son began it

[1] Alice Meynell, *The Children*, p. 113. London, John Lane, 1897.

young. At four months old he was wildly delighted when a handkerchief was laid over his face and then suddenly withdrawn. "He uttered a little noise which was like an incipient laugh." By the eighth month Miss Shinn's niece had begun to create the game, herself holding up a cloth before her face and peeping out delightedly.[1]

Joy in seeing quick changes of face and place is another baby joke. Between four and five months, Sully tells us that an older sister, full of flight and gay noise, seemed like a kind of jester to the baby monarch. At six months he roared over her screams when he pulled her hair.[2] In the fifth month Miss Shinn's niece found recurrent and delightful humor in explosive sounds. The baby laughed and laughed even in the midst of crying to hear the puffing sounds, *poo-poo*, blowing upon her like a steam-engine. When children acquire language, humor leaps into a new dimension. Seeing his sister dip her crust of bread in her tea, baby Clifford at eighteen months exclaimed "Bath!" and chortled over the good joke.[2]

Two very important activities of babyhood point far beyond to the "dramatic age"; these are the love of ordering and the beginning of imagination. Between two and three years, plays of ordering become engrossing. Preyer reports the arrangement of shells, pebbles, or

[1] Millicent Shinn, *The Biography of a Baby*, p. 212.
[2] James Sully, *Extracts from a Father's Diary*, pp. 411, 426.

buttons in rows as early as the twenty-first month.[1] Elizabeth, just under three, shows great glee in arranging shells in long, straight lines. Unclothed like a little Ariel she crouches on the sunlit beach among the clam shells she is arranging, her knees so bent that they tuck neatly into her slender armpits. She is wordless with absorption, intent on world-mastering plans. Not for a minute does she allow one shell to get out of a line straight enough for three-year-old purposes. If any is moved out of true, back she goes to arrange it. And as the line grows longer and longer she celebrates the event by peals of flute-like laughter. Order, the maker of the world out of chaos, is before her.

One day she wanted a cherry from the overhanging branches. I gave her three and she dangled them joyfully by the stems. "One for my mudder, and one for my nurse, and one" (much the reddest) "for myself." I was walking on when I heard a shriek of pure joy behind me. Elizabeth had turned all her cherries round, and pulling the stems between her fingers she had all the heads in a triumphant row on top of her hand. It was unbelievably beautiful and surprising. "Three in a row! Three in a row!" she kept calling with the jubilance of a discoverer. And again I knew that we are dull not to see the overwhelming joy of three cherries all in a row between our fingers. Is there not magic and mystery in that recognition of the value of order and classification? Does it not link into something of

[1] *The Mind of the Child*, p. 383.

the same human delight the eager baby and the eager scientist?

The discovery of the charm of order shows imagination. No one knows when imagination begins, but by three years it is already marked, and the fascinated observer can watch a matter of fact pass into a matter of fancy and, as often as not, back again to prose. Observing carefully one little girl just under three I found that dolls were to her an ardent but momentary delight. She had been brought up out-of-doors, and heavy, short sticks of wood covered with a handkerchief were her favorite children. Weight in a child seemed to be the important factor. She despised and rejected any light stick. Out in the woods she carried a stick nearly half her own size and tenderly put it to bed, which consisted in squeezing the cover and bottom of a paper box close up to it, one on each side. Then she ran off to a balancing feat along a fallen log so that one might think that in her triumphal progress she had forgotten the baby. But no! suddenly she would remember. "Oh, it's cwying." Back she rushed to soothe it with her favorite panacea, a drink of water. Yet, curiously enough to grown-up expectation, it was but a minute before she brought me the aforesaid baby, transformed back into a mere stick of wood, and requested to have it put on the fire. When we shouted, "But it is your baby!" she looked puzzled. The stick wavered for some time between its two characters; then she accepted it back as a baby. This, I be-

lieve, is typical of children's belief in the life of inanimate persons of their choice. Children don't think that dolls are alive; they play hard that they are, while the game lasts, for children, though we call them imitative, are born artists.

Babies often seem to me to re-invent rather than imitate the sacramental acts of the baby tribe. Every baby of two or three, recognizes a curbstone as the proper place for children to walk. Henry, just three, prefers to go upstairs two steps at a time, pulling himself up by my hand. Shoving cards under a rug is another baby invention and involves the pleasure of disappearance and reappearance, a constant joy. Like most inventions, it arises at first accidentally. As one sits on the floor, a card may at first slip quite heedlessly under the rug; but when its act is discovered the fun of continuance begins, and a recognized game develops.

Here let me give one quite original invention about which other babies must not be told or there might be trouble. One day I had put the little Joan (three and a month) to sleep for her nap on the sleeping-porch; door shut and all toys removed. Leaving her quiet with eyes pinched together at command, I went down to lunch. When I tiptoed back an hour later there were sounds of merriment from the sleeping-porch. There lay Joan, still flat on her back, but with her bare right foot triumphantly held up in the air, her great toe harnessed and most evidently personifying a fiery horse. "Get up! . . . Stop now! . . . Naughty!" she was shout-

ing. The ingenious babe, deprived of playthings, had taken off her sneakers, pulled out the lacing, and invented the grand idea of driving at furious speed her own great toe.

CHAPTER IV

AN EARLY COURSE OF APPLIED ETHICS

AND now I reach moral training! How early does it begin? Do babies start as angels and become corrupted by the world? Are they born in sin as the Church has sternly maintained, or are they just conscienceless — a *tabula rasa?* Is n't it strange that every one of these opposing doctrines has been held and that probably no one of them is true? Let me point out some of the obvious facts that modify all theories.

Babies are born on a ship already launched, sailing under orders to the baby sealed. When babies disobey these orders they are sometimes accused of having no moral sense. Yet they have had but a short time to study the world's ways and a limited number of folks to teach them. "No sooner felt than done" is the wee baby's motto. It is but gradually that he learns the strange human task of balance and of inhibition; one thing at a time is all he contains. His conscience is not of what is right, but of what we consider right. It will be years before he accepts a right and wrong of his own; yet surprisingly soon he will test us to find out the answer to two important questions: Do you mean what you say? and, Will you yield if I yell? On the answer to these questions hangs all the law of babyhood.

Every year in Massachusetts our legislators pass more

than nine hundred laws, many of them confused, partisan, hard to interpret, even self-contradictory. Baby, when he finds himself permitted to play with water one day, forbidden the next, ignored the third, will draw his own conclusions: "Laws are queer things anyway; if you can break them without the crack showing publicly, all goes well." Therefore the most important thing parents can do is to think up and identify their principles. It is much safer to think before the misdeed happens and after it is over than during the explosion.

The first baby usually comes alone and can receive full, almost too full, attention. We may congratulate the universe that it has succeeded in gradually reducing the number of babies to be educated in a family at once down to one or two at a time. In proportion to the number of babies, the unique training given to each decreases. Only a few months ago in Massachusetts I heard of a Jewish mother who presented four at once to the world, and there may be a Mendelssohn, a Spinoza, a Rothschild, and a Mary Antin among them. Perhaps they will educate each other. I hope so, for one mother of twins tells me that she spends so much time in their physical care that there is no time for morals. The old woman in the shoe, who doubtless did her best, had a very simple code for her numerous offspring. "She whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed." Then there was quiet at last to darn their stockings; for, living in a shoe, I suppose they wore stockings. But usually babies come one by one, and the mother who need not

work has time to watch the fascinating sight of a child rediscovering the world and trying to tyrannize over it.

The first eighteen months are morally easy. We have but to make an atmosphere in which peace and joy will grow. Health and habit are the watchwords. If a baby is rightly fed, rightly dressed, and let alone, he is usually "good." It is the mother, not the baby, who has to learn moral control — not to pick him up; not to point out all the kingdoms of the world at once to his young, blinking eyes; not to lure him to show off his accomplishments to every admiring stranger; above all not to submit to his tyranny. Every enterprising baby will experiment in the fine art of tyranny. If he finds that when he cries at being left alone some one will pick him up, he yells all the louder. If he gets what he wants by begging, he will become a professional beggar.

Let us face now the earliest faults — wrath and jealousy. We are children of wrath from the start. Anger is of all passions the earliest; as early as three weeks, Sully insists.[1] As early as two months old, according to Perez, babies have fits of passion, pushing away violently what they do not want, or screaming when toys are taken from them. "I have once seen a capricious little creature, eleven months old, put herself in a violent temper because she could not succeed in seizing her grandfather's nose!"[2] Now that grandfather probably did not at first face with full imagination the consequences

[1] James Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, p. 408.
[2] Bernard Perez, *First Three Years of Childhood*, p. 70.

of having his nose pulled every time he met the baby. It may at the outset have seemed quite a compliment, an expression of intimacy; but I imagine it began to wear on him. It no longer roused his sense of humor as much as it did that of the baby. So quite suddenly he drew the line at noses in general and his in particular. He should have debarred noses the first time or as soon after as the baby had grasped the nose and he had grasped the nose problem. Then the baby would have put noses in the category of matches, tooth-powder, and china — things not to be touched with impunity, and his wrath would not have been aroused.

Jealousy follows anger with startling quickness.[1] Wise Saint Augustine, whom nothing could escape, recognized jealousy in tiny babies. "I have seen a child make himself sick with jealousy. He was not yet able to speak out, but quite pale, he looked with bitter glances at the other children who were being nursed with him." Perez, who is apt to meet with precocious children, gives an example of a baby of three and a half months jealous when her sister is placed in her mother's lap.[2] Darwin's son, at fifteen and a half months, showed jealousy of a doll which his father was petting.

Anger is wider-reaching and commoner than jealousy. In children who cannot speak, it has only the outlet of kicks, screams, biting, and scratching. Darwin, in his "Expression of the Emotions," gives what he thinks are

[1] Cf. Compayré, *L'Education Intellectuelle*, p. 316.
[2] Perez, *First Three Years of Childhood*, p. 29.

genuine examples as early as the fourth month. Babies, much like the rest of us, work up their grievances into something impressive. Watch a baby who has quite peaceably stopped crying, try it all on again for the benefit of your sympathy, squeezing out reluctant tears, squaring rigidly its bow-shaped lips, and peering out of half-closed eyes to take a keen measure of the effect of society. Clever little people! How young they learn to take advantage of our weakness!

These tempests of anger and jealousy, furious as they are, usually die away by three years. Why they retire we often do not know. Probably the most interesting account ever written of the inner nature of childish anger and of its cure, is the description by Helen Keller of her passionate soul imprisoned in darkness.[1] I wish I could quote the whole account. It should be read by all who love children.

With the middle of the second year, walking, talking, and climbing have complicated child-training. We begin to crack far harder moral nuts. But with new difficulty comes along new resource. Babies are no longer merely passively good. They are knee-deep in active goodness. Courage is theirs; they have learned to walk in a hilly universe; ambition is teaching them patience in ways of difficulty; love has already begun to guide them into tiny paths of helpfulness. Students of children differ much as to the age at which they may be said to have a conscience. Perez names seven months, Darwin thirteen.

[1] Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*, ch. IV. Doubleday, Page & Co.

The question is largely a matter of definition. On the negative side a child learns in his early months what is forbidden and makes no distinction between the forbidden and the wrong. Encourage him to eat sugar and it is right; forbid him to eat sugar and it is wrong. Some acts remain in doubt. It is touching to see a baby of two look round wistfully as he spatters the water in a dish to judge by your expression whether it's a wicked deed or a good joke. He does so hope it's the latter, but with parents you never can tell. The forbidden and the required are for a long time mere legal statutes to a child.

But on the positive side the light of a moral dawn is visible even in children under two. Whenever a child sets himself a goal and pursues it against his inclination, he is showing conscience. Little Celia, only twenty months old, picked up her big book in one hand and her own low chair in another and dragged both across the room to a place beside her mother. Slippery, heavy things, they kept dropping, and quite to herself she murmured, "Hard, hard," yet on she went till the deed was accomplished. Her own law of achievement forbade her to yield.

Even younger than twenty months, babies show the great moral virtues of persistence and courage. The first far-reaching, never-ending motive of ambition reaches a baby, says Preyer, with the deliberate lifting of the head. Oh! that symbolic act, forerunner of aspiration! This effort consciously to lift up his head, a baby begins to make with persistence and courage as

early as the sixth or seventh week; but complete mastery is not attained for four months.[1] "For a week or two, now, the baby made a good deal of progress in the control of her body. She strove valiantly every day to keep her head erect and made some little advance." [2]

A little later, at three months, writes Millicent Shinn, came a strenuous effort to lift herself or to sit up. "She would strive and strain, with a grave and earnest face, her whole baby-soul evidently centred on the achievement. She would tug at our fingers till her little face was crimson; she would lift her head and shoulders and strain to rise higher; fall back and try it again, till she was tired out. The day she was three months old, she tried twenty-five times, with scarcely a pause, and even then, though she was beginning to fret pitifully with disappointment, she did not stop of her own accord." [3] After many a trial and failure Miss Shinn's niece found it wise to start from a sidewise position, rolling over from her back if necessary. She acquired that art. Then, one, two, three! with open mouth and flushing cheeks, she lifted herself backwards. That accomplished, no resting on our laurels or our knees. We've got to move. . . . Poor baby! she pushed with both hands and "chattered with displeasure" as she found herself going back instead of forward.

One of the common early aims of babies, at which they work with zest and intelligence, is the process (appall-

[1] W. Preyer, *The Mind of the Child*, p. 264.
[2] Millicent Shinn, *The Biography of a Baby*, p. 89. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

ingly difficult to grown-ups) of getting their toes into their mouths. Miss Shinn's niece showed here, at six months, resourceful wit. When her toes kicked away and refused to come up, she grabbed her ankle and heel and pulled them triumphantly to their destined spot. This done, the toes could be managed.

Some time after the domination of the feet by the mouth comes the great event of creeping. If a flower could move, what a wonderful life it would have! Creeping is an early form of ambition. In the first effort to reach what he cannot get while sitting on the floor, the baby falls over. But out of his fall he makes a victory, for he sees that the fall itself has brought him nearer to the toy on the floor beyond him, and then he pulls himself together and jerks toward his goal — muddling through at first, like many an Englishman, but gradually acquiring the skill and speed of an expert on all fours. Of two specially wise babies it is told that they spurred their fainting resolve to creep by throwing a coveted toy, a rattle, an orange, before them, and then hitching along after it. Oh! wise young babes! A Daniel come to judgment! What better can we do through life than to fling out into the unknown a shining plan and so lure ourselves to pursue it?

Next to creeping comes the valiant effort to stand, first with a support, then, tremulously glad, alone. At nine months standing was a passion to Miss Shinn's niece; she might fall, bite her tongue, pinch herself, get scratches and blows, but these were as nothing to the

exultation of learning to stand. Toys were cast aside, all other joys and prizes were neglected. With Saint Paul she shared the human ambition: "And having done all to stand."

Tenderly this first effort to stand at ten months is described by a mother who always gets the "inside" point of view: "It was in his little mosquito house — and holding to the rail. He stood there in perfect agony. His little face was quite full of misery, and yet — once having done this incredible feat — he felt obliged to keep it up, so that a dozen times a day, during those first few days, I had to go in and set him down on the ground again to allay the terrifying little conscience that kept prodding him up to his dangerous task."

But neither creeping nor standing involves the perils of walking. The child's first step into space toward its mother, like the little bird's first tottering fly from the nest, is an act of wondrous courage. "The first step alone of a little child makes one involuntarily hold his breath. The small face reveals a conflict between the bold resolve to venture all and the cautious counsels of conservatism. Suddenly one little foot is shoved forward rather than lifted, and one hand at last stretched out as a balance. Sometimes that one step is all, and the little Icarus sinks down again. But often the child to whom the effort is particularly difficult makes, like a boy learning to skate or a man walking a rope, several steps in one direction, especially when the haven of safety is near at hand. Many children make no further attempts for

weeks after the first; others again follow it up at once. Very gradually walking loses its anxious, doubtful character and becomes an easy habit not requiring attention."[1]

Our effort to walk is an early instance of the overcoming of fear by ambition and by trust. As we watch this first faltering step into the universe the most timid of us may know that we too once conquered fear! In the case given below it seems as if the discomfiture of not being in it led to conquest of walking.

"A week ago we went to a babies' party — twenty wee youngsters from one to two years old. Poor old Richard was just under a year, four months younger than all the others. He was the only one on all fours, and it annoyed him so much that he sat quite dignified and still, frowning at all the toddling going on around him. Once or twice he tried his own method of walking, which was to push a chair in front; but this interfered so many times with the swarm of young society that he found it awkward and gave it up.

"But the experience gave him a great impulse to action. The next day when his father helped him, he took a few tottering steps alone, and the day after he was trying it in secret in his glass piazza — and then! suddenly, with a fine flood of confidence, he would turn away from hands held out and work his own little direction, straight across the room. It is a dear sight. His legs jerk like a mechanical toy, and his elbows are

[1] Sigismund, *Kind und Welt*, p. 74; quoted by Groos, *The Play of Man*, p. 81.

held high and bent to produce balance — there is a square little contracted determination about his shoulders, and then motion sets in and he steps off — wherever he wishes."

(13 months.) "... He feels the real dignity and elevation of walking as we old unconscious ones don't see it. Every step with him means a noble little elevation of the knee, and a belief in the immensity of his stride that suggests nothing but 'seven league boots.' It is a gloriously happy time for him — these days when he is really accomplishing!"

Who shall say that babies are not hour by hour giving themselves moral training in patience, in perseverance, and in courage? Within a single year they have digested Browning's philosophy

> "Holds we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake."

Sometimes, I believe, this moral resolve to grow toward independence causes a genuine strain in a baby's life. I have seen one or two babies pass from bubbling happiness almost to solemnity at about the age of three, and the change has seemed to me due to the intense desire to be a big boy and not a baby. "Put me down," one such commanded his father. "If the company see me being carried they will think I am a baby." The desire to be something better than what we are begins young and lasts as long as we grow. When the passion to be a big boy or girl sets in and persists, babyhood has begun to struggle out of its chrysalis and into a marvellous, butterfly future of make-believe.

BOOK TWO

THE DRAMATIC AGE

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CHAPTER V

AS SEEING THAT WHICH IS INVISIBLE

As he approached the end of babyhood, a small child announced quite seriously, "My birthday is coming so soon that I'm afraid I shalln't be four when it comes." We laughed at the impossibility, yet after all he was right. When the great day came he had hardly attained the noble age of four. Babyhood still wrapped its soft folds round the child, as he emerged into the new world of the Dramatic Age.

The Dramatic Age! It is *the* age of childhood. The child whom Christ set in the midst of the wondering crowd was not a baby in arms, nor a *gamin* of the streets, nor a lanky adolescent. It was a child whose eyes are those of the child in the Sistine Madonna, full of wonder and vitality. In Froebel's rediscovery of this Golden Age of mankind it was the imaginative play of childhood that chiefly fastened his attention. Tagore, exquisite as is his vision of babyhood, yet rises highest when he describes the dramatic child, utterly happy, sitting in the dust with a bit of broken twig or sailing the seven seas and the thirteen rivers of fairyland. And when

Stevenson and Kenneth Grahame set themselves to paint the portrait of childhood, their model is still the child who is past babyhood, but not beyond make-believe. When we marvel how through all the centuries till the nineteenth, grown-up mankind has managed to ignore the obvious fact that children are in many ways superior, that they ought to teach us and reprove us, that their physical perfection, their wealth of energy and invention leaves us hopelessly in the rear,—then it is the child of the dramatic age before whom we humble ourselves. Babyhood is too helpless and dumb, later childhood too faulty and problematic, to excite in us the same wonder, refreshment, and startled reverence.

I shall begin by recalling some of the spiritual superiorities of the Dramatic Age. In science, in money-making, in the prudent complications and minutiæ of civilization, it is not up to our spectacled seniority. But when it comes to the art of enjoying life and seizing its zest and novelty every moment, we are hopeless dunces by comparison. After we have watched our superiors in their play, in their games, in their familiar intercourse with invisible comrades and in their work, it will be time to recognize also their faults. Their disregard for exact and literal truth, their unpunctuality, their fears, their disobedience are real enough and need a helping hand from us, as I shall try to illustrate before this chapter's end.

Poets, scientists, and psychologists have celebrated the Dramatic Age and children themselves have inlaid

its heavenly floor with patines of bright gold; but it holds one central light that dims — no, that reveals, all the rest. Robert Louis Stevenson knew its secrets and he never forgot one. Childless, he kept childhood in his heart alive till, whistling Pan-pipes to keep up his spirits, he died, a lad of forty-eight, among his childlike, adoring friends in Samoa. If we had Stevenson alone as the voice of the Dramatic Age we should have enough to guide us into the fairyland of Play, — play that wanders every day into the magical maze of romance. We grown-ups eat our three meals a day, stupidly complaining of the coffee or relishing the taste of mustard on ham, but the child in the dramatic age has far deeper concerns. Kind Nature may transform food into tissues in us, but the child transforms food into poetry.

"When my cousin and I took our porridge of a morning we had a device to enliven the course of the meal. He ate his with sugar, and explained it to be a mountain continually buried under snow. I took mine with milk and explained it to be a country suffering gradual inundation. You can imagine us exchanging bulletins; how here was an island still unsubmerged, here a valley not yet covered with snow; what inventions were made, how his population lived in cabins on perches and travelled, and how mine was always in boats; how the interest grew furious, as the last corner of safe ground was cut off on all sides and grew smaller every moment, and how, in fine, the food was of altogether secondary importance, and might even have been

nauseous, so long as we seasoned it with these dreams. But perhaps the most exciting moments I ever had over a meal were in the case of calves'-feet jelly. It was hardly possible not to believe — and you may be sure so far from trying, I did all I could to favor the illusion that some part of it was hollow, and that sooner or later my spoon would lay open the secret tabernacle of the golden rock. There, might some miniature Red Beard await his hour; there, might one find the treasures of the Forty Thieves, and bewildered Cassin beating about the walls. And so I quarried on slowly, with bated breath, savouring the interest. Believe me, I had little palate left for the jelly; and though I preferred the taste when I took cream with it, I used often to go without, because the cream dimmed the transparent fractures." [1]

Do you remember nibbling your chunk of bread into the shape of an animal? Have you ever experienced the fascination of melting a square caramel on the coal fire just enough to soften it to putty and then moulding eggs, nests, birds, men, and beasts out of the bits? In the end, of course, you heartlessly ate the bread, gnawing off with a mixture of regret and brutal satisfaction leg by leg, until with a big gulp the head disappeared. But though there was zest in destruction the enduring charm was creation.

None of us know the full and final meaning of our possessions till they are touched with the magic wand

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, "Child's Play."

of a child's imagination, till like a genius looking with fresh eyes upon the world he sees new uses. I had thought meagrely of the well-way in my house, up which the stairs ran for four flights, as a light-giving device. Until two boys, five and six, crossed the continent to stay with us I did not discover that the fourth story was really Mount Tamalpais and that a railway track ran all the way down the bannisters to Mill Valley at the foot.

"Please, Aunt Ella," they said as they regretfully left this important railroad work to return to California, "if you ever build another house I hope you will make it with a well-way like this because it is so convenient."

It is not always exhilarating to the polite hostess or the orderly housekeeper to have her possessions transformed in this way, but it ought to be. Artists have their inconvenient ways, but we would not sweep them and their disorder out with the dust. In our own house on one occasion an old gentleman waiting for his turn to consult the doctor in his office was sitting on the mossy bank, or so-called sofa, in Mill Valley (*alias* my front hall). Suddenly he felt his bald head tickled and looking up saw a long string for fishing in the brook of the valley, descending from the well-way above. To a tired spirit there might be something disconcerting in an adventure like this wherein we are abruptly called on to take our part. But old gentlemen would prove their youth best by not minding such interruptions to their prosy thoughts. Surely it cannot rightly annoy the

housekeeper so much to have her broom taken away to be Don Quixote's horse, as it does Don Quixote to have his horse taken away for the crude purpose of sweeping floors, just when the horse is most needed for a charge on the windmills. And if we are determined not to leave behind us the zest and stir of adventure, we shall shoot back an answer when the Kingdom of Adventure calls to us through a child's voice.

But this is not the only great privilege that childhood offers us. In a child's company one can seize the chance to know a live poet. Out in the spring fields among opening apple-blossoms, we found a brook clogged with the remnant of old autumn's dun-colored leaves. With long sticks we tried to drag the leaves from the stream and give its rippling eagerness freedom to run. We worked in silence awhile, intent on our aim. Then: "Let's pretend that we're cleaners of all the world and make the brooks beautiful," he said, and so he did, the five-year-old. In his presence the sober and clogged was floating away and the stream of youth ran fast.

The child in the Dramatic Age remakes the world and moulds it nearer to the heart's desire. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I can't find my glove anywhere," murmurs Clara, aged three, as while her mother darns the family stockings she plays dressing up as a fine lady. Her mother's hunt for such an article as a glove is likewise vain, till with the wisdom of experience she inquires, "What did your glove look like, Clara?" "Well, it looked *something* like a stocking," Clara admits with a

touch of reluctance in letting a literal description dim the glory of her best gloves. The cherished glove, seen to mature eyes only as a common stocking, is soon found in the work-basket.

We have also to learn from imaginative children the charms of what to us is monotonous. We grown-ups have a stupid way of finding places dull. To the child of five no place is dull. The railroad station is a moving-picture-show where marvellous trains pass by; the desert is a wonderland of sand-palaces. On any afternoon in a chilly park you may see an imaginative child crouching on all fours sticking twigs into the moist earth and blissfully content as she fences in her deer park.

In July, 1912, the Overland train was crossing the alkali plains under blazing heat. Reading had lost its hold, card-playing was played out, every one was wilted and inhumanly bored. No, not every one! A dirty-cheeked, blue-frocked Jungling with a steel splint hitched to one leg, began gleefully a series of gymnastic feats with two green velvet footstools. Tilting them together he crawled under the narrow arch dragging his stiff bandaged leg exultantly. This accomplished he hopped on top and slid blissfully down them, as down a ladder. Then the pillow suddenly became a horse and he leapt on its back, proclaiming in loud tones the adventurous history of his hero. "He climbed the mountain; he fell down the precipice, and then . . . !"

Chesterton, Roosevelt, Madame Montessori keep

such vitality all their lives. The world to them is as full of the riches of joy and adventure as it is full to my cripple of the magic of miraculous footstools. And each in our own way we must find somewhere this rapture of transforming energy, or we may well be ashamed to meet the eyes of a four-year-old. For it is not insignificant that Shelley all his life exulted to make white-winged toy boats and sail them down silvery streams, or that Browning in Naples could only reluctantly be dragged back by Mrs. Browning from modelling heads in clay to writing poetry. Genius keeps forever its touch of childhood.

So does the introductory palaver of the conjuror: "You see, ladies and gentlemen, I have here an ordinary glass tumbler and a lemon." Already at the words these common objects take on mystery and romantic freshness. Long before the lemon passes through the bottom of the tumbler, long before the tumbler itself has vanished from under the "common linen handkerchief" ("Can any gentleman lend me one?"), we feel with a thrill that simple things have adventurous and magic possibilities in them. It is half the conjuror's spell to evoke for a few minutes this forgotten truth, stripping the scales from our dull eyes. The lemon, the tumbler, and the handkerchief *are* miraculous and beautiful. In childhood we know it all the time. Later we generally forget.

The games of the Dramatic Age start often with a plunge into some strange wilderness. "Nurse, nurse,

let's pretend that I'm a hungry hyena and you're a bone!" "Don't talk to grandpa," shouted a dramatic explorer of four; "don't talk to him. He's a wolf!" But on the whole the Dramatic Age tends to an inside point of view of the primeval human experiences, being a mother, keeping shop, funeral, calling the doctor, milking the chair-cows, putting out fires, making hay, running steam engines, playing school, trying on gayly and earnestly the main occupations of the human family. Wordsworth was one of the first to notice this anticipation of experience:

> "Behold the child among his new-born blisses,
> A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
> See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
> Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
> With light upon him from his father's eyes!
> See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
> Some fragment from his dream of human life,
> Shaped by himself with newly-learned art, —
>   A wedding or a festival,
>   A mourning or a funeral;
>   And this hath now his heart,
>   And unto this he frames his song:
>   Then will he fit his tongue
> To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
>   But it will not be long
>   Ere this be thrown aside,
>   And with new joy and pride
> The little actor cons another part;
> Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
> With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
> That Life brings with her in her equipage;
>   As if his whole vocation
>   Were endless imitation."[1]

[1] William Wordsworth, "Ode to Immortality."

The range of *invention* in the Dramatic Age has been interestingly studied by Genevra Sisson. For six weeks she watched the free play of twenty-nine children of five and six years, on a playground. During that time thirty-one different kinds of dramatic games cropped out. There were wild horses, circuses, stores and storekeepers, electric-light men, Indians, wild pigs, butchers, telephone girls, dragons, steamer games, Noah's ark, hunters, orchestras, policemen, Santa Claus, — all peacefully commingling from one day to another, one game often lasting only a few minutes.[1]

In the older years of the dramatic period the desire to imitate even gruesome and shuddering events becomes strong. The horror of being a Christian makes its special appeal to little Jews.

"I'm afraid I liked everything that was a little risky. I particularly enjoyed being the corpse in a Gentile funeral. I was laid across two chairs, and my playmates, in borrowed shawls and long calicoes, with their hair loose and with candlesticks in their hands, marched around me singing unearthly songs, and groaning till they scared themselves. As I lay there, covered over with a black cloth, I felt as dead as dead could be." [2]

Another form in which the Dramatic Age reaches heights of creative imagination, is in its discovery of invisible comrades. The lonely child at this age seems

[1] Genevra Sisson, *Children's Plays*. In *Educational Studies* edited by Earl Barnes.

[2] Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*, p. 106. Houghton Mifflin Company.

able even in solitude to find its friend in need. Memory does not always stretch back to the third and fourth year, yet in a group of fifty women whom I questioned, one third remembered vividly their invisible playmates. "I did pretty well, I had four!" said a woman of thirty. "Their names were Oatmeal, Pettijohn, Wheatena, and Margaret. The cereal children were all bad; only Margaret was good. Whenever I entered a room, I stood back to usher them all in, assigned them chairs and told them how to behave. At night they slept in my room, each in his place."

"The other day," added a young mother, "I was startled to hear my boy of two look into blank space, beckoning, and say to it, 'Come here, Johnnie.' Then he moved over on the bench to give Johnnie room and fed him carefully with toast." Another woman told me that her invisible playmate seemed to be herself as an ideal. "Big Sarah" she was called, a highly conscientious lady as contrasted with herself — Little Sarah — who indulged in misdoing.

I knew a girl and her brother who both had an invisible boy friend up a tree. He never came down, but they took candy and shared it with him. They never introduced him to any one, but their parents knew of him. One day the invisible comrade proved a dangerous character. He began to dance wildly in the tree and stumped the girl's brother to do the same. He was not so light and airy and fell out of the tree, breaking his leg.

"How did your invisible children finally vanish?" I asked the mother of four.

"Oh, they simply disappeared."

"But *mine* was run over by an engine," another girl laughed out. "I really did not mind then, but my family were afraid to refer to the tragedy. I had outgrown the comrade and I guess she had to be got rid of."

Sometimes the end is painful at the time and wistful in memory. Here is the reminiscence of a poetic girl who kept her comrade long:

"When I was fourteen years old I had to decide a question that seemed of large importance to me. Since I was eight or nine, I had had an imaginary companion, a lovely fairy child that I had grown very fond of. I can remember that she would take me through the woods and introduce me to her wood-nymph friends, or how I would go on long bicycle rides while she whispered enchanting tales to me as she flew by my side. But on my fourteenth birthday I decided that I was growing too old to keep my little fairy companion and that if I did n't part with her forever I should die before I was fifteen. I really believed that this would happen, though I never knew where I obtained such an idea. So we parted, I weeping real tears of grief. For a while after this I would often imagine her to be calling to me to come and play with her. But I would never speak to her and gradually she faded from my life."

CHAPTER VI

THE DAWN OF RESPONSIBILITY

"We recognize imagination only too clearly in the Dramatic Age," some parents and teachers will say; "but where does it lead? Is n't it a dangerous ally to laziness, dreaminess, and lying? Does n't the imaginative child glide lightly out of responsibility so that he never learns to do anything accurate, thorough, and against the grain? Does n't his sense of truth grow vague so that he slips into sophistication?" This is the usual form of the attack on Froebel's kindergarten system. And surely if play were the whole of any child's life, there would be danger. The more dreamy a child is, the more he needs definite, regular, though very brief tasks, prosaic ways of helpfulness, solid and nourishing as bread and butter to eat with the jam of his play. For the imaginative child is an artist in play and like many an artist is apt to shirk the prosaic and practical. Definite duties such as setting the table, putting away toys, hanging up his clothes, shutting doors quietly, folding his napkin carefully, making his bed neatly, will help to give him a much-needed standard in every day of things to be done.

Stevenson apparently begged to differ from me in this. "Play," he says, "is the whole of life in the Dramatic Age. Even a meal is felt as an interruption in the business of life. 'Oh! why,' I remember passionately

wondering, 'can't we all be happy and devote ourselves to play!'"[1] Doubtless play was the whole of life to Stevenson, artist and story-teller, but most children show even in the Dramatic Age, impulses and desires that are not for the business of play. As early as two or three dawns the beginning of responsibility, quickly roused by a wee brother or sister, or even by an older one. At three and a half my little friend Hilda has begun to feel an urgent responsibility for the conduct of her older brother of six.

"Mother," she whispers at night, "what shall we do to that little boy of ours? He's talking rough!" And rough little Roger retaliates from his pillow with a great yawn, "Well, you're not the mother of all this family, anyway, Hilda." But Hilda, for the time, rejoices to feel that she is.

Sometimes this assumption of responsibility by which a child leaps out of infancy, comes from a special event, associated ever after with beginning to be grown up. Lord John Lawrence, the famous Governor-General of India, when he was a boy of four or five, was sent to market with his nurse to buy food. His father gave her a five-pound note for the purpose.

"I trotted along by her side," he told his daughter years later, "she amusing me as we went." At the market she could not get her note changed, many people thinking she had not come by it fairly. The nurse was finally taken before a magistrate. She was confused and

[1] *Virginibus Puerisque*, "Child's Play."

frightened, and could only say that her master was Colonel Lawrence and that his little boy was with her. "On hearing my name, I began to feel very important, and thought I would come forward and speak up for my nurse; so I came out from behind her — for I had clung to her all the time. 'Why, sir, it's our old nurse Margaret; she is a very good woman and all that she says is quite true. I think if you will let her go you will do right, as my father knows that what I say is quite true.' The magistrate at once let her go and said, 'Well done, little man, you spoke up for your nurse bravely.' I was tremendously stuck up by this and walked home with my nurse, feeling immensely important and thinking that I must now take care of Margaret, and not she of me." [1]

So the child who is met by responsibility on his path becomes suddenly years older. This is most noticeable among the "little mothers" of poor children, but it is true also of any little brother or sister who feels called to meet a need.

Constance and Frances were but a year apart in age and usually seemed to blend in perfect comradeship, forgetting the great stretch of time that separated their birth. One Sunday while every one was away, Frances, the younger, was taken sick. When I came home, Constance, the six-year-old, met me grave-faced with a white apron carefully pinned round her waist.

"Frances was sick and I was all alone. I thought you

[1] *Life of Lord John Lawrence.*

were at the Lincolns', so I tried to telephone. I got to the L's in the book" (she never had read before), "but I could n't spell the rest. But I gave Frances a hot bath and put her to bed and gave her my best doll to comfort her. I think she'll be all right."

Very close to this assumption of responsibility springs up ambition, bringing a valiant readiness for definite work. Even at five a boy still drenched in the romance of play cried out for study. "Mother, you *must* teach me to read or I'll never be able to put myself through High School." And at the dawning of ambition daily life becomes restless, unsatisfactory, without the steadying guidance of carefully planned work. We looked in through the window of the out-of-door school; it was Sunday, but Hester, six, was deep at work; her cheeks were rosy, her eyes were glowing, she was wrapped in thought, wrapped also in a heavy gray blanket, but round her head was a silver-tinsel crown, the joyful acquisition of a birthday party. And this queen of the fairies on a Sunday noon was, by her own choice, spending the day in delicate operations of arithmetic: — one from four leaves three, two and three make five. As we entered she broke forth in jubilant words, "This is a present I'm making for *you!*" Native and deep is the love of learning! And learning has many forms beyond that of schooling.

At six years Carola's eyes sparkled with ambition. "I'm determined to learn to row." "Determined peo-

ple usually succeed," I answered. "Well, *I'm* determined. I am not going to do anything else till I have learned to row two oars." And in spite of the fact that we owned no boat she succeeded. Back of my house, half concealed by sprays of woodbine that grew over the piazza roof, was happily placed a small gymnastic apparatus, familiarly abbreviated to "the app." The app. was a wonderful tempter to daring and the conquest of fear. Even the most timid child would crawl up two steps of the ladder about the second day and by the end of a week he would be gaily sliding down from the top, triumphantly commanding, "Look at me, Mother!" and then, not getting sufficient attention, "Look at me *all the time!*"

One day Carola undertook a stunt she had never tried before, involving hanging upside down from an appalling height. At the critical moment she screamed, terrified, and I ran out and lifted her down. But still she lay sobbing, her head buried in my lap, while round her gathered a group of sympathetic and inquiring playmates: "Why do you cry? Are you hurt, Carola?" When, unanswered, they all ran away, she lifted up her tear-stained, earnest face. "I want to go back to the app. and try it over again." Back we went alone and valiantly she pulled herself through the difficult task. Beautiful as a flying bird among sunlit raindrops was that child as she darted back to her comrades.

The Dramatic Age is not without its faults, but the

spirit of the age itself is an ever-present help in guiding a child through their mazes. Lack of truthfulness often troubles parents at this time. Taken in its largest reaches, truth is so central and so essential a virtue that any distortion of it calls for watchfulness and firmness. Yet untruthfulness is far less dangerous in the Dramatic Age than at any later time, for the simple reason that it is less conscious and deliberate. Indeed, there is an intimate connection between imagination and truthfulness. It was part of the gift of imagination in Stevenson that in later years made him peculiarly accurate and discriminating in his studies of human nature. It is but a hit-or-miss kind of truth that we get without imagination.

In the Dramatic Age, however, imagination is little concerned with accurate seeing. A little Boston girl horrified her mother by reporting that she had seen a great big lion in the Public Garden. "Oh, Peggy, that is untrue. Go upstairs and pray to God to forgive you for lying," the mother commanded. Peggy returned serene and suave. "Did God forgive you?" asked the mother, anxious for repentance. "Oh, yes, indeed, Mamma. He said: 'Don't mention it, Miss Perkins, I've often mistaken that big yellow dog for a lion myself.'"

In less formally polite terms Stevenson takes the same forgiving view of untruthfulness in the imaginative age. He too says, "Don't mention it." "Whatever we are to expect at the hands of children it should not be any peddling exactitude about matters of fact. They

walk in a vain show, and among mists and rainbows; they are passionate after dreams and unconcerned about realities; speech is a difficult art not wholly learned; and there is nothing in their own tastes or purposes to teach them what we mean by abstract truthfulness. . . . Let a stock-broker be dead stupid about poetry, or a poet inexact in the details of business, and we excuse them heartily from blame. But show us a miserable, unbreeched human entity, whose whole profession it is to take a tub for a fortified town and a shaving-brush for the deadly stiletto, and who passes three fourths of his time in a dream and the rest in open self-deception, and we expect him to be as nice upon a matter of fact as a scientific expert bearing evidence. Upon my heart, I think it is less than decent. You do not consider how little the child sees, or how swift he is to weave what he has seen into bewildering fiction; and that he cares no more for what you call truth, than you for a gingerbread dragoon."[1]

And yet, true, memorable, and consoling as this view is, it does not wholly meet the parent's need. Not in peddling exactitude of words, but *somewhere in deeds* he must plant and water the seeds of truthfulness, even in the imaginative age. In my experience trustworthiness in action is an aspect of integrity much earlier realized by a child than truthfulness in word. Faithfulness in deed, and even to the letter of the deed, comes earlier than literal truth in language. Therefore small

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, "Child's Play."

but definite responsibilities may train a child in that faithfulness whose root is one with loyalty and truth.

Little Roger was left alone to hold baby sister a few moments while his mother was called to the telephone. She stayed away much longer than she had expected. When she came back there he was, flushed and strained, but holding baby with all his soul and with all his might: "Baby grew very heavy, Mother; I thought she'd break my arm, but I have n't dropped her at all."

Truthfulness and accuracy in the sense of thorough trustworthiness, a skirt neatly hemmed, a box well put together, may germinate and climb in the soul of a child before truthfulness in word, a slow-rooted plant, has more than shown its earliest leaves.

Unpunctuality is a minor fault enough in all ages; hardly mastered at seventy-five except by those annoying people whom pride and punctuality make unpopular, but peculiarly frequent in the Dramatic Age. Why is unpunctuality frequent at this period? Often, I believe, because time is to many children of this age an unimaginable thing. Centuries have no more days in them than a week. George Washington and Booker Washington easily merge in their minds. A Sunday-School teacher enlightened me once on this strange merging of events. She was reviewing with her class the Old Testament story of the sacrifice of Isaac. "And who was Isaac?" A hand went up shaking tumultuously: "Oh, I know, teacher! He was Abraham Lincoln's boy."

That answer sweeps away the centuries as casually as we brush away a fly.

In the earlier years of the Dramatic Age, time itself is dramatized. Two incidents will illustrate this: "No, dear, you can't go out now; the time has passed by," said Theodore's mother. "Passed by, Mother!" he cried excitedly, "Did the time get out of the clock and pass by?" Elizabeth was not so dramatic as Theodore, but she was a tender-hearted child. "Your watch is too fast, darling," said her mother. "Why, yes, Mother; I could n't bear to have the big hall clock beat it, so I put it ahead."

Children, of course, differ much in their awareness of time. There are children who seem to be born punctual and keep right on being so, but the careful study made by Mary S. Barnes seems to show that few children get much clear idea of time until the age of twelve, though after seven they inquire what it is.[1] If this is true shall we not be gentle and forgiving to the unpunctuality of a child living in the age of chivalry, and obliged at the sound of the clock to travel all the way from the middle ages to the twentieth century?

Gentle and forgiving, yes, but not yielding and lax must be the elder's point of view. Punctuality, dull and prosy virtue as it is, has roots that take hold on romance. Punctuality is a form of chivalry toward our comrades, and a form of single-souled faithfulness to one's trust.

[1] Mary S. Barnes, *Historic Sense in Children*, p. 83. In *Educational Studies*, edited by Earl Barnes.

To be on time is to guard the integrity of the lives of others who depend on us; to do instantly and at the right moment the disagreeable deed that one knows should be done, is knighthood *sans peur et sans reproche.* Children in the imaginative age can well feel this call. Does not Cinderella running down the steps at midnight and dropping her glass slipper in her flight forever ripple out the need of punctuality and of swift obedience? Time, that mysterious, fleeting presence in our lives, is full of romance. "When the clock strikes!" What appeal could be more dramatic?

And so even with children in the Imaginative Age we have ways of plucking the mask from the stern virtue punctuality and seeing his commanding face. I remember trying to make myself quick in dressing and punctual to breakfast by the gay pretence that if the clock struck and found me unready, my head was to be cut off. And not once, but day after day did I play that game with genuine thrills of anxious foreboding.

When, as so often happens, children are unpunctual because it is so difficult to turn from a beloved game to a prosaic bed, a warning of the coming of time will often help. "In five minutes I shall call you and then you must fly," will, if the command is enforced, prepare the path of punctuality. Above all, I believe that the virtues we most believe in and most exemplify, most long to see in our children, we shall get. If, then, we expect dreamy children in the Dramatic Age to be on time, we ourselves must be a little ahead of the game.

Unpunctuality, like most of the faults in this age, shows that the child is still relatively unaware of other people. He lives in a world of plans and adventures, largely constructed by himself and far more beautiful than our world, unless we too are poets. No wonder he blunders when he begins to match his time-tables and milestones against ours, and to arrive at some tolerable agreement or compromise. Admittedly he is not strong on the social virtues. Grown-ups can beat him at that, and he has to learn by practice and failure.

CHAPTER VII

FEAR AND DISOBEDIENCE

THE Dramatic Age having but a slight hold on facts and a strong hold on imagination, is often a time of unreasoning fear. Indeed, one of the consolations of our being condemned to grow up and be civilized is that we certainly do get away from the torture of fears surrounding our childhood.

"One of the greatest gains of being grown-up," said an unusually courageous man, " is that one's days are no longer haunted by fear. Fear played a large part in my childhood. I was desperately afraid of the dark and even more afraid to admit that I, a boy, could be afraid. Every night I remember leaping from a distance onto the bed, full dressed, in terror of what might be underneath it. On the bedquilt I could undress in comparative safety. By day I could search the space, find nothing, and say how foolish I was, but every night panic returned, strong as ever. Reasoning was quite useless. Only growing up helped me to get over it." Part of this release is merely that as we grow up we are bigger and stronger than most of the things which in childhood we very naturally dreaded. But we develop also a greater stability or stoical heaviness on the emotional side which is comforting. We also grow more certain about the terrifying things which *can't be*, and

having excluded them once for all from existence (so far as we are concerned) we are freer to fear only what ought to be feared — our own self-punishing sins. Children, to whom all things are possible, terrify themselves by their own imaginings. In the bedroom of the Hôtel de Deux Mondes in Paris I remember a small boy of five, afraid to go to sleep because bears and lions might get into his room. "But they can't possibly," we argued reasonably. "It is a great big hotel in the city and bears and lions don't live in the city. They could n't get into your room." "But they *might*, they *might!*" he reiterated piteously, and would only be comforted by a big poker near his bedside. Armed like a knight of old he could sleep in peace.

I have spoken of the unreality of time at the Dramatic Age. Space and distance are also unreal. Our assurance that the bears were not in the hotel but in the forest probably sounded to the child as if we said: "The bears are not in the nursery but in the back garden." The bears in Alaska would terrify me very much if I thought Alaska might be brought suddenly near as the telephone brings a voice close to your ear. So space is uncertain to children, and time too may be endless, the future absolutely ungrasped. Dorothy, when left behind in the launch by a teasing brother who rowed away without her, howled with anguish, "Oh! oh! I'm left behind forever!" It seemed foolish to her parents, their nerves irritated by her shrieks, and they blamed her roundly. But Dorothy at that moment felt no sense of

time; no logical weighing of probabilities; no trust whatsoever in the universe. These calm assurances come at a later age than five. She was overwhelmed by waves of despair. "Life was a cloud-drift around her, alone in shelterless space." The shadows of terror spread wide when the sun of confidence is yet low.

Do many of us have, as I do, an aching remembrance of long-unuttered childish fears? Such foolish ones they were, too, fears of being laughed at because I wore a round comb while other children wore ribbon bows; fear of imagined bites from the big black dog at the garden gate; fear of crossing a shaky bridge over a roaring three-foot dam of water, high in my vision as Niagara. I was even afraid of being weighed, because two slender cousins, with a talent for teasing, jeered at my weight. Many a summer day I remember talking volubly (with carefully concealed implications) about the advantages of walking through the garden rather than by the farm, because at the farm were the dreaded scales suggesting the horrid idea of being weighed. Yet I was only normally chubby and my cousins were far too thin.

Cowards have a hard time, tor no one likes to confess he is one of that despised race. So each coward stands in shrinking solitude, picturing heroes around him. I am a coward; therefore I want to say that all of us, however timid, have a little courage. We can take some step in advance, though it may have to be a shorter step than our sturdy neighbor with long moral legs can take at a single stride. The art of developing courage is finding

out what length of step toward the conquest of fear a special child can take, and then encouraging him to take step by step, slow or fast as best suits his nature. It is common to say that we should throw a timid child into the water of hard experience and let necessity teach him to swim. I protest; for the memory still haunts me of fear steadily increasing as a child, because nobody helped me with the touch of a hand over railway trestles. The fear of a dentist who pulled your teeth when he had said he would only look at them, grew so clutching that even now it throbs indignantly out of the past. Such fear never taught me to swim above moral difficulties; on the contrary, it submerged my spirit.

What would have helped me? A small but definite success. I failed in courage because the task given me was too great to accomplish all at once. Here is an instance from another field of effort. In teaching writing Madame Montessori noticed that the process was too complex for a child easily to master at one stroke. She divided the process into feeling and recognizing raised letters and making strokes to fill in outlines. Having mastered these two steps separately the children were ready to write. So if we learn to watch the steps of moral advance we may find it divide into the gaining of skill and the gaining of motive or interest.

A child who sews or reads very badly, keeps on very badly through the inertia of discouragement. If you rouse some love of achievement you give him hope, and

if you by special teaching increase his skill, his hope leaps to join his achievement. The match of success strikes the match-box of desire and behold a flame, a birthday candle is lit in the child's history. *Divide et impera!* holds in morals as in science. No rude boy can become courteous all at once, but he can gain skill and the desire to express a few definite acts of courtesy. No whimpering little girl can sniffle back every whine, but under the impetus of her love of lilies I have seen a little flower friend water her flowers even when her arm was scratched and spurting blood.

Not only through success and interest, but through faith, courage can enter a child's life. The world of the imaginative child is still a world of enchantments and terrors, fairies and hobgoblins. Into it law and order enter almost wholly through some help of parents endowed with wisdom, love, and majesty. Many a child's fears, then, can be helped best by the parent's word or act of faith. The terrifying stethoscope becomes normal when daddy asks the doctor to let him have the fun of seeing it on his chest. If it amuses and does n't hurt daddy, it is all right for Amy also.

Little children are often afraid of the dark. Sometimes a protecting candle is the best solution for a time. But I know a wise mother who tells her little daughter of three about the protecting beauty of darkness. She shows how exquisitely night wraps us about. "Put out your hand and feel how soft it is. The glaring light that would hurt our sleepy eyes and keep us awake is gone.

The kind darkness lit only by shining stars is guarding us and soothing us."

In overcoming fear, then, we must take such steps, long or short, as the child can follow. Nor need we hesitate to call on the highest motive to conquer a fear that looks minute, for is not all fear ultimately a lack of trust in the universe or in its representatives, our comrades? There was a crashing thunderstorm in the mountains, where, in white-winged tents, a family of little children were passing the summer. One little girl of three was terrified by the storm. She loved singing, and to comfort her, her mother sang out into the strange voice of the storm a message of glorious faith. "Oh, all ye thunders and lightnings, praise ye the Lord. Bless Him and magnify Him forever." The listening child heard a stronger voice than that of the thunder. She lighted with joy over "our new song," the Psalm of David four thousand years old, redeeming terror by glorifying God.

A few children of this imaginative age seem able to conquer fear by definite and determined practice aided sometimes by the magic of heroic example. A girl tells me that she conquered her fear of the dark by resolutely marching night after night through terrifying inky-black rooms. Another girl forced herself into a cold bath by repeating Emerson's stern: "When Duty whispers low, 'Thou must,' the Youth replies, 'I can.'"

It is important never to forget the strange depth of wordlessness among children even in the most happy

and companionable homes. The more fearful a child is, the more afraid she may be even of confessing her fear. Fear of being laughed at or scorned, struggles with fear of bears and burglars, and only after the fear has vanished does the startled mother learn that night after night her child has sobbed itself to sleep. "It's such a comfort to get to the point where you can speak of being afraid," said a radiant girl of nineteen. Looking back on my ignominious experience, I think parents and teachers and friends might help by giving casual opportunities for confidences, expressing their own past fears, making fear a common, conquerable, gay-hued experience of most of us, instead of an inky and shameful weakness probably peculiar to you alone.

In overcoming fear in little children there must necessarily be many different methods, but if fear — lonely, unrevealed dread — is as common in the lives of little children as the confessions of adults seem to show it to be, surely it is worth seeking many ways of minimizing it. Among these ways I place high definite training *at one's own speed*, reassurance from parents, a guiding hand only gradually removed; the stimulus of success, heroic example; the development of religious faith.

When disobedience is a frequent fault at the Dramatic Age it is usually the parents' fault. Swift-footed, almost automatic obedience to recurring orders ought to be acquired in babyhood and be largely native to children of five years. To argue over hours of bed-going, daily

baths, choices of food, is utterly wearing to a child of five. Such things should be settled comfortably as early as possible and, if it may be, once for all. There should be absolutely no exceptions made, no temporizing, no yielding, no vacillation. Children accept the inevitable and are rested by the regular. It is unfair to them to let them hope that they can wheedle or tyrannize. A few hard cries are far less wearing to a child than recurrent arguing and coaxing. But obedience to new and special orders must come at this period slowly enough for the child to take them in and reverse the sailing boat of his mind to go your way and not his. A ship well under way finds it hard to turn about quickly. Mrs. Meynell, a very close observer, says that children's minds are slow and unready and for that reason little children often seem morally deaf. "Anna, go and sit on the opposite side of the table next Phyllis." Anna is motionless in spite of repeated suggestion. Wise teacher! She does not force the issue. In two minutes Anna has moved of her own accord.

"That's a queer thought!" exclaims the policeman in Lady Gregory's romantic play, "The Rising of the Moon." "That's a queer thought and a true thought. Wait now till I think it out." No one will ever quite know what goes on in minds under five, but it may be something of the same process that made the sergeant ponder. "Wait now, mother and teacher, let the child think it out."

Madame Montessori has had the same experience of

finding little children disobedient from inability to rouse out of their dream and take in quickly a new order: "It is a very common mistake, this of trying to obtain by means of prayers, or orders, or violence, what is difficult or impossible to get. . . . We ask little children to be obedient, and little children in turn ask for the moon. . . . To obey it is necessary not only to wish to obey, but also to know how to. . . . When in the first period of spiritual disorder, the child does not obey, it is exactly as if he were psychically deaf and out of the hearing of commands. In the second period he would like to obey, he looks as though he understood the command, and would like to respond to it, but cannot, or at least does not always succeed in doing it, is not quick to mind and shows no pleasure when he does. In the third period he obeys at once and with enthusiasm." [1]

I once reproached a small cousin of mine for not obeying when we asked him to thank a kind friend who had given him a charming toy. He looked up at me a little puzzled and piteous and replied, "Well, you know sometimes your mind wants to and your mouth won't do it."

Above all special devices to secure the great universal virtue of obedience shines out one enduring principle. When we command obedience we must always point at obedience to God and not to us as parents or teachers except as we represent God to the child. We aim, then, to develop "minding your mother" into obedience to

[1] Marie Montessori, *Montessori Methods*, pp. 363, 364, 368; trans. by Anna George.

one's self and one's purpose, and finally into obedience to the heavenly vision. We must, in every new case, free the child from obedience to us and attach him to the highest he knows. Every new obedience ought to mean a loosening of the cord we hold, as we attach it higher up — never a tightening of our sense of power. On one side is compulsion, on the other caprice or anarchy; we need to develop obedience. The duty of the parent is to lead the child beyond himself. He is the trunk, but the branches must stretch far beyond the trunk. He is there to lead them to their heavenly father, never to subdue them to his own earth-stained will.

And now let us leave the mean subject of children's wrong-doings and return to the shining glory of their virtues in the Dramatic Age. Their crown of goodness includes industry, self-forgetfulness, independence of hardship, faith in the invisible. Every idea to a child is a plan of action bridged across valiantly at once instead of separated, as with us, by ulterior considerations or sloth. He is marvellously forgetful of self, absorbed as we all should be in the task to be done, the game to be played. He is far less dependent than we on weather, place, physical comfort. He is, therefore, far closer to seeing everywhere some of the myriad meanings of God's world than we whose vision of sunlit pine-needles is capable of being blurred by a crook's carelessness or a fall in the price of stocks. Our petty worries drive away delicate, emerging insights.

A child of five abounds in creative belief: "Nothing can stagger a child's faith; he accepts the clumsiest substitutes and can swallow the most staring incongruities! The chair he has just been besieging as a castle or valiantly cutting to the ground as a dragon, is taken away for the accommodation of a morning visitor, and he is nothing abashed; he can skirmish by the hour with a stationary coal-scuttle; in the midst of the enchanted pleasance he can see, without sensible shock, the gardener soberly digging potatoes for the day's dinner. He can make abstraction of whatever does not fit into his fable, and he puts his eyes into his pocket." [1]

But is not this choice of the invisible behind or within or beyond the visible the essence of right living? We choose the meaning we will to see in person or act or landscape. Everybody has a nose, but we do not dwell with interest on our friend's nose. So rejecting the peevish or sarcastic or petty implications in your neighbor's speech you can choose the best in sight or even more truly the best beyond sight, her kindness in coming to see you. And often the child seeing the glory, the dancing light, in a bit of silver paper, has a far truer vision than the man who sees too vividly the glory of a silver dollar.

The wonder of the Dramatic Age is the wonder of making much of tiny things: I was packing my jewelry when in trotted Ruthie, aged two and a half. She seized a box with a ruby ring in it, and opened it eagerly

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, "Child's Play."

while I proclaimed the beauty of the sparkling jewel. But wise little Ruthie utterly rejected jewels. With dimpled delight she picked out from the box a fluffy bit of white cotton-wool and tenderly, exultantly, carried it right away. She folded her arched fingers over the little wad, but did not close them for fear of hurting it. Her "Pat it! Pat it! It's a darling little pussy," woke all the laughing echoes that ring over our choices of great and small. For little Ruthie had chosen the better part and driven our eternally foolish money values back into the corner where they belong.

Out of nothing the child makes much. And though we often accuse him in the harshness of our hearts of making chaos out of order, yet fully as truly he makes a cosmos of his own, full of light and order, out of the chaos of unrelated and prosaic facts. Wherever the dramatic child goes creation begins. Our mother kept our block-towers and our fairy grottoes, even when they were built in the best drawing-room. She knew they were too precious to be destroyed at night. True, these creations are not permanent, but where are Nineveh and Tyre? To a dramatic child one day is as a thousand years. His palaces may topple and fall, but they have played their part in his history. The most beautiful things are evanescent — sunrise, soap-bubbles, dewdrops, morning-glories, and the Dramatic Age in childhood, — evanescent but eternally alive.

Does imagination die away after the Dramatic Age?

For a time in the Angular Age it seems to vanish like summer flowers frostbitten by the sharp air of literalness. But I believe that many an imaginative child will find dramatic days returning again and again through life to help him. In the brooding years of adolescence, poetry will spring up and love of beauty and art will carry him into far realms. He will find himself once more a hero. In the Age of Hero-Worship, visions of perfect friendship will come to him associated with chivalric ways of service. In the Age of Romance he will be ready to die like a knight of old for his lady-love and will dream of heroic, unlikely feats.

And through all the years will come times when the linking of spirit with younger and older children will bring a boy and girl back to dramatic play. There was a magic pasture with a great rock rising out of cow-nibbled hillsides. It was Château Norbelle, a castle with dungeons and banquet halls and a great moat around it. It is still a castle. I never see it with literal eyes. My big brothers, cousins and sister played there for years. They had sharp swords and resistant shields and they went out hacking down the enemy (who were apt to be mulleins) and dragging them back to dungeons. For several years I only looked from a distance with wistful eyes. I was seven years younger, too small to be much thought of among knights and warriors. But a happy day came when I was admitted by a kind older sister as a serving-maid. She was Lady Hilda and I was plain Alice, but still there was hope. I dreamed of the

days of advancement and treasured a little blue and silver cross, blessed symbol of my admission among crusaders. For two or three years we must have played there before other claims trumpeted away the boys. And so it seems a gap of almost ten years must have been bridged among us comrades by a persistent dramatic interest.

If, then, imagination returns like white-throated sparrows in autumnal days and twitters a reminiscent song, is it of value or only a dreamy, spendthrift time intruding on the practical?

I believe imagination to be in the final point of view immensely practical, because the world itself is mysterious and romantic and will open its secrets only to him who holds the key of insight. Pasteur could never without imagination have pictured the possibility of infection by living germs. It took fiery imagination to burn through the dark theories commonly accepted and find almost alone a new meaning. It took enormous patience lighted by imagination to trace his way through endless experiments and failures. Again and again and again Pasteur asked his questions of Nature, and when Nature shook her head refusing an answer, then Imagination undaunted leaped to ask a new question. Without imagination no cure to hydrophobia, to diphtheria could have been found. Is it not equally true that without quick and constant imagination we can never begin to cure the far greater evils of human misunderstanding?

BOOK THREE
THE ANGULAR AGE

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CHAPTER VIII

DRY LIGHT

WHEN the clock struck twelve, Cinderella fled for home. Her fairy world was vanishing; her coach was rapidly yellowing to a pumpkin; the ears of her fairy steeds pointed suspiciously like those of rats. Every child at some age experiences, as did Cinderella, the flight of fairyland. When his clock strikes seven, fairyland fades in a silvery dawn.

"My teacher asked me to write a composition on why I like fairies," said the nine-year-old, rather wistfully, "but somehow I don't like fairies as much as I used to. I could n't think of a single thing to say about them." Three years before she had been all fairies; all drama and imaginative absorptions in games. Out on adventures we went to pastures new, great cliffs whose dungeons and moats overlooked the sea. Older Sister enjoyed the game, but peered laughing round its edges — assumed a character, since she had it not. Little Sister was wholly lost in drama. Through the broad daylight it was dark night to her, and with a mushroom upside down for candle, she lighted me all the way home, never once forgetting to pause when I paused, that I might

still be guided by her light. Now fairies had vanished. At the gate of the child's garden stood angels with flaming swords: Hither shalt thou not return.

The creative and romantic enthusiasm which governs children in the Dramatic Age is chilled when they reach the Angular Age. Disenchantment falls upon them, often suddenly. They withdraw into a more cautious and critical position. Parents and friends are aware of something lost; the gain is not so clear. But I want in this chapter to describe the strength as well as the weakness of this trying period. For unless we see this we cannot help them when they most need help. And as the beginning of help is in understanding I will try to answer at the outset the question, Why does fairyland vanish?

I believe that we can rarely account by any outward event alone for the coming of the Angular Age, yet certain experiences may hasten it. The event is only a lighted match laid to twigs ready to burn, yet that moment of sudden flame may spread a revealing glow across the sky of youth. One such event is going to school — an impressive event and one that makes its impress. Parents sometimes accuse the teaching in school of quenching a child's imagination, but this accusation is unfair. A child in the kindergarten age does not lose his imagination by going to school. The change to the Angular Age comes *with* the first years in what children call a real school, but we cannot leap to say that it is caused by it. There are many other factors. The new sense of importance, being held to work, con-

tact with wider ideas, and above all a closer association with one's contemporaries. Since disbelief is contagious it is often, I believe, not so much school itself as the steady pressure of intolerant public opinion that drives dramatic play into covert. As late as at thirteen years of age Robert Louis Stevenson regretfully put aside his toy soldiers, but resolved passionately that when he was grown up and untroubled by sneering boys he would take them out again.

"A child who had been remarkably fond of toys (and in particular of lead soldiers) found himself growing to the level of acknowledged boyhood without any abatement of this childish taste. He was thirteen; already he had been taunted for dallying overlong about the play box; he had to blush if he was found among his lead soldiers; the shades of the prison house were closing about him with a vengeance. . . .

"'Plainly,' he said, 'I must give up my playthings since I am not in a position to secure myself against idle fears. At the same time I am sure that playthings are the very pick of life; all people give them up out of the same pusillanimous respect for those who are a little older; and if they do not return to them as soon as they can, it is only because they grow stupid and forget. I shall be wiser; I shall conform for a little to the ways of their foolish world; but as soon as I have made enough money I shall retire and shut myself up among my playthings until the day I die.'" [1]

[1] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, "Crabbed Age and Youth."

And indeed he did return in mature life to the games which his childhood judged best. In sickness he had lead soldiers once more charging up and down the Land of Counterpane. In vacant hours he turned to "Penny Dreadful" stories and never ceased to praise them. And he blew his delicate Pan-pipe delicately to the end. Wherever you turn in Robert Louis Stevenson's writings you feel the small boy surviving, unabashed.

How long the Dramatic Age — the Golden Age of human life — can be preserved and how its annihilation can be prevented is a problem for every parent. Surely its soul should rise again and spread through all the activities of our later life. City life is its foe and oftens kills it easily. On the other hand, in sensitive, poetic children brought up in the country or kept apart from rougher lads, I think the Dramatic Age may linger long. Fairies and other invisible companions vanish, but dramatic games remain. Cave-dwellers and Indians still people the world, and die out only slowly before the inroads of boy civilization.

But we are too apt, as I said above, to explain changes in character by some outward event. More often than not, I believe, it is the mysterious pressure of the new period itself that drives away the fairies.

"Do you remember giving up imaginary games?" I once asked Carola.

"Oh, yes!" she laughed out. "I remember just as well as anything when I began to hate making-believe. Lottie and I used to vow we'd never play house again."

"I know you did," said the younger sister, "and I wanted to keep on. I only gave up fairies and make-believe because you laughed at me and I was scared."

"Did you have much fun after you hated imaginative games and gave them up?" I asked Sylvia.

"No, we had a horrid time at first. Lottie and I walked up and down the beach bewailing our fates!"

When the Angular Age comes to the average boy or girl it is often with such a startling reversal of acts and values that parents need, as it were, an almanac announcing its arrival: "Sudden changes in temperature. Prevailing winds northeasterly. Look out for squalls." But after all it's an ill wind that blows nobody good. There is, I feel sure, a soul of goodness even in this apparently evil time, and in this chapter I hope discerningly to search it out.

What, then, are the characteristics of this age? The first is health. The Angular Age is peculiarly a time of vigor and high spirits. The summer upsets and winter colds of little children become rare. "Between eight years of age and twelve lies a period of extraordinary toughness and resilience, when the boy can eat anything and do anything. He is simply one bundle of prodigious energy, which he must explode, and which he generally insists on exploding in his own way." [1] His own way is usually through a Declaration of Independence, independence which, like that of our ancestors, involves much

[1] G. W. Fiske, *The Boy Problem.*

that is good. We, living ourselves in an Angular Age, may well look sympathetically at this troublesome virtue of independence.

The desire to stand alone, to judge for one's self, to be somebody and not merely take part in others' plans, characterizes not merely the Angular Age, but the century in which we live. No wonder that it crops out early in our development and finds much encouragement in the world around it too. For we are all of us living in an Angular Age, an age when independence, critical vigor, readiness to rebel, to doubt and often to destroy, are at a premium, when authority is dim and dubious and the golden realities of religion, chivalry, and adventure seem like golden dreams. Hence the child at this stage of his growth is peculiarly the child of his age and finds everywhere reënforcement for his ideas. Probably this is more obvious in boys than in girls. At any rate the soul of many a boy rebels. Disguised as an Indian and with wild war-whoops he pitches overboard authority, affection, courtesy, poetry, and religion. Fortunate it is that these casks are unsinkable, nay, almost waterproof. They will return to him after many days.

But the rebellion is mostly skin deep. It is a sharp and sudden epidemic to which for a time all not immune succumb. Yet the deeper character is not hurt. Indeed, this swaggering Boston Tea-Party attitude is often only a mask to cover an undesired gentleness which instinct says must not be discovered. I know a boy whose soul

is tender-hearted and sensitive to beauty. Something inside drives him to maintain that he is self-confident, fierce, intolerant, clamorous, flamboyant; and, meanwhile, just out of the corner of an eye, or a sudden delicate deed peers his true self, gentle, humble, and compassionate. Under the cloak of a gay indifference it hides, shy and sky-reflecting like the first hepatica on a brown hillside. Some day the boastful lad will confide humbly that he is n't any good at diving. Some day the heartless boy will stand white and sorrowful over the death of a favorite canary. Thus, then, he will reveal faintly, like a reflection in rippled water, his past and his coming self.

Indeed, a boy born gentle may feel obliged to camouflage that exposing quality.

"Why do you sing in such a rough voice?" I asked him one day. "You can really sing quite high."

"Yes, I know," he admitted reluctantly, "but you see I am afraid of losing my gruff voice."

That is it much of the time with Rupert! He is not nearly as ready to bite as he seems at this period, but he is mortally afraid of losing his fierce bark. Even his kindness must be rudely enforced. "Would n't you like one of my apples?" he started in politely one day, and then, as I gratefully chose a small one, he added thunderously, "Gosh! don't take that little one! Go and sit on a tack! Take the biggest one!"

A common, though not, I think, universal accompaniment of the Angular Age is *self-consciousness*. The

Dramatic Age is not self-conscious. It entices into itself so much of the universe that it is clothed upon by the beauty of imagination and moves about protected. When a child turns easily into a wolf or a fire-engine there is little danger of his worrying much over the personal appearance of Tommy Smith. But as imagination fades, self-consciousness emerges. With the over-large and prominent second teeth comes a time of over-large self-concern. Self-consciousness is not all loss. Through it, indeed, we must all of us pass when we attack what is new. Even the painful and embarrassing self-consciousness of the Angular Age is still a new start in life. Reflection, self-criticism, the perception of what we can and cannot do, the aptness for finding where we belong in the service of society — all these start in self-consciousness and never lose the characteristic tang of that moment when first we recognize the true element of isolation and lonely independence in our humanity.

Meantime and at the outset self-consciousness is perversely corporal. It is our bodies and especially their defects of which we have become so acutely conscious. We often fear that children will suffer from vanity; but do not they become more self-conscious, more deeply bruised and morally hurt through a sense of being ugly than of being beautiful? Beauty means approval and so largely freedom from self-distrust; but awkwardness and the sense of being ugly pierce us with self-consciousness.

"Which wrote the poem?" asked the Princess.

"This little fellow with the tuft on his crown," answered Papa, smiling gaily.

"What does my tuft matter to him? Is there no other subject of conversation?" I thought, and retreated into a corner. . . .

"I knew very well I was not good-looking myself . . . therefore any allusion to my personal appearance offended me deeply. . . . Moments of despair often visited me; I fancied that there was no happiness on earth for a person with such a wide nose, such thick lips, and such small gray eyes as I had; I besought God to work a miracle, to turn me into a beauty; and all I had in the present, or might have in the future, I would give in exchange for a handsome face." [1]

Grown-up women have told me laughingly stories like this: "I remember looking hopelessly in the mirror to find a single inch that was passably good-looking. I examined bit by bit my face, barring off the rest with a piece of pasteboard. My eyes alone were tolerable. I knew I was hideous. I decided that the ugliest girl in church five pews away closely resembled me, and every time I looked at her rounded shoulders and her squatty nose I shrank back into my shell of self-consciousness."

With self-consciousness goes often a kind of *dryness*. Babies bubble over with laughter; the Dramatic Age has perpetual springs of new delight; but the Angular Age is parched like July and all the delicate fronds die

[1] Tolstoy, *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, p. 63; trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood.

down to their roots. Napoleon, keen observer, states the case concisely enough. At ten years old he was at school at Brienne: "Every one said of me: 'That boy is no good except at geometry.' I was not very popular. I was dry as parchment."[1] If Wordsworth had noticed children from year to year, he would have seen that not to the old man, but to the child of eight to twelve the trailing clouds of glory fade into the light of common day. The old man lingers dreamily over the sunset, the growing boy scorns it as a waste of time. For eleven is not an age of profound sentiment for beauty.

"I was down at the Blakeslees' when the moon came up," I heard a girl tell her pal. "You ought to have seen the fuss they made about it. It was rather pretty, but I can't see how any one can get so excited just about a moon."

Many a child in the Angular Age also feels impelled to assert that he is utterly scornful of demonstrative affection.

Little sister, to Helen of the Angular Age: "Please let me kiss you good-night, Helen. It makes me feel all lonely when you pull away."

Helen: "I don't want to be slobbered all over."

Little sister, indignantly: "I don't slobber."

Helen, compromising: "Well, I'm perfectly willing to kiss you if you'll promise not to kiss me."

Little sister joyfully agreed. And yet, within a week big sister had withdrawn this privilege. I found the

[1] *The Corsican*, p. 3.

children quite formally shaking hands at arm's length as they said good-night, poor little sister considering even this meagre quarter loaf of affection better than no bread. If only she could have known that in a year or two, big sister's arm would encircle her with a protecting tenderness, never again to be lost!

Very close to interest in the facts about one goes cynicism about the invisible. The energy of excited and delighted feeling which makes the Dramatic Age so enchanting seems now to have been converted largely into punching and banging about. Poetry has become prose. Adventure no longer seems adventurous, only pretentious. Hence the child just beyond the dramatic stage is an aged cynic in the presence of imaginative games and stories.

"When we sat down on the ground and, imagining we were setting out on a fishing expedition, began to row with all our might, Volodya [the older brother] sat with folded hands and in an attitude which had nothing in common with the attitude of a fisherman. I remarked on this to him, but he retorted that we should gain nothing and do no good by either a greater or less flourish of hands. When I made-believe go hunting with a stick and took my way to the woods, Volodya lay down flat on his back with his hands under his head and said it was all the same as if he went too. Such speeches and behavior cooled us toward this game and were extremely unpleasant; the more so as it was impossible

not to admit in one's own mind that Volodya was behaving sensibly.

"I knew myself that I could not kill a bird with my stick. That was what the game consisted in. If you judge things in that fashion, then it is impossible to ride on chairs; but, thought I, Volodya himself must remember how, on long winter evenings, he covered an armchair with a cloth, while one mounted as coachman, the other as footman, and the girls sat in the middle, with three chairs for a troika of horses, and we set out on a journey. And how many adventures happened on the way and how merrily and swiftly the winter evenings passed. Judging by the present standard there would be no games. And if there are no games, what is left?" [1]

The dry, hard aspect of the Angular Age is seen not only in its neglect of beauty and in its intolerance of imaginative games, but especially in an intolerance of sentiment. In this mood we hate to hear others express what we feel lacking in ourselves. We develop a censorious conscience in such matters. We consider it a duty to check in ourselves and in others this weakness called sentiment and to thrust forward a resolute will against it. Hence many of the outward and repellent signs of the Angular Age manifest the will not to be sentimental. Little sister overflows with enthusiasm about a talk she has just heard at school. Older sister and brother (fourteen and twelve) discuss scornfully her lack of

[1] Tolstoy, *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, p. 31.

decent reserve: "Why, if I liked anything ever so well, of course I would n't say so. I'd just say it was rot!" "This raid against sentiment expresses itself in the word 'silly.' 'Silly,' indeed, is now the favorite word — it is almost the earmark of the period; when he begins saying things are silly you may know that it is the beginning of the end." [1] Thus saith Joseph Lee, best student of this age which he calls "The Big Injun."

Among the objects that are silly and therefore to be condemned are sisters a few years younger. Watch a boy in the self-assertive stage castigate with looks of scorn his whimpering little sister. Not a ray of understanding troubles his unswerving condemnation. To his mind there's no health in her. "Where's Polly?" asks a boy friend of her own age. Her scornful brother of twelve breathes: "What in the sun can you see in Polly? Why are you so stuck on playing with her? Polly cries when she is hurt, cries when she cannot go on a picnic, cries when she loses her silver quarter in the lake. Polly is no good." (Q.E.D.) A few years earlier he was her comrade in dramatic games, a few years later he will be proud to see the other boys admiring her, but just now she is *persona non grata*. It is hard on Polly. Back into my memory steals a wistful morning when my comrade brother, two years older than I, deserted me to play henceforth with a superior and older boy. For a moment my playmate was moved with compas-

[1] *Play in Education*, p. 166.

sion as he left me, and before he went he presented me with a minute basket wrought out of red-edged burrs. I kept the prickly gift, but the hurt was not healed.

The cool censor who inhabits our tenements of clay in this period shows his self-reliance by doubting not merely the games and sentiments which he formerly shared, but the ancient and solid institutions of society, among them education. School itself often seems to the Angular Age a silly and sentimental place. "What is the use of school, anyway?" queries Helen half roguishly. "You learn a great deal more when you sail a boat. Oh! I know you learn to read; but reading only makes you sentimental. I'm always sentimental when I read." As for her brother Jean Jacques, he goes a step further. Anent music and Latin: "I don't see the use of all these lessons. What's the good of studying Latin? Why should n't we have just tents and a pony? People take too much trouble getting things. It would n't matter if nobody had grand houses. We could all live in the country," says young Rousseau.

Of vocational education no such criticism is made, for vocational education goes with the grain. Its usefulness is less subtle and more akin to boyhood than Latin. He responds to the pragmatic test. In this as in so many other ways how like he is to the spirit of our time! How angular we all are especially when we go to the polls, each counting for one, nobody for more than one, and decide referenda on education, engineering, sociology, and weightier matters! Vocational education is the rage

and the fad for us as for the eight-year-old. We are no older than he.

Even in religion there is ebb-tide at the Angular Age. George Meredith, feeling his way with Arthur, his oldest son, writes, "I do not trouble the roots of him much." And from a maiden of ten with long golden curls comes this outburst: "I don't ever want to be pious and religious. Father is n't. He almost never goes to church. I'd hate to be religious, because then I could never, never blaspheme!" As we laughed she commented, "Oh! I only blaspheme a little."

Yet I am intent to defend rather than to accuse the Angular Age, and no one can fail to see merit, even courage in the free criticism of institutions and beliefs by the growing child. It is good as a stage to pass through, before one settles down. It is only when one never grows beyond it and remains in one's stunted opinions that one is to be pitied.

Nevertheless the Angular Age is faulty enough in its own way. Any one can see that it bristles with superficial faults, and curiously enough, superficial faults are often far more irritating than deeper ones. "It really is n't fair," I once heard a girl declare; "most children's faults are covered up, but every one of mine is right on the surface where people can see it." Puffer and Lee, both ardent boy-lovers, accuse the Angular Age of disillusion, sterility, restlessness, mischievousness, deviltry, desire to show off, lawlessness, bad manners, uncleanli-

ness, love of plaguing people, inconsiderateness, boastfulness, stealing, irritability, brutality. A long list of annoying faults. But for the most part they seem to me like the awkward muscular efforts of a Houdini to get out of his strait-jacket. A great achievement is going on, and it involves much wriggling. What is the sense of the wriggling?

CHAPTER IX

HUNGER FOR FACTS — DEEDS OF DARING

JOSEPH LEE puts at the creative centre of the Big Injun life its hunger for reality. The term seems to me too wide. No man alive but is on a quest, more or less active, for reality. And reality may be expressed in ways that the Angular Age ignores — through poetry, through philosophy, through the service of humanity, through prayer and praise. The Angular Age thrusts all these things aside. Its two prevailing interests are athletics and constructive science. Its controlling desire is that of self-assertion — self-assertion which often veils insecurity, even humility. Why, Amiel asks in his "Journal," does a mob howl through the quiet night? And he answers that it is to assure itself of its own importance. Boys and girls in the Angular Age howl very loud. Perhaps they even prefer to have their ears boxed than not to be noticed. "The child of this age wants to impress others, to let the universe know that he is here; but his deep desire, behind all other objects, is to convince himself." [1]

But if hunger for reality is too wide a phrase to describe the germinating centre of the Angular Age, what better account can we offer? The child at this age wants

[1] Joseph Lee, *Play in Education*, p. 186.

what is no fake, but the genuine article. He wants what can be quickly demonstrated to all. He wants what can be found without embarking on a sea of feeling, possibly turbulent, certainly unstable, sometimes treacherous. Any reality that one can experience in a dry, cool mood, without prolonged study or delicate perception, and above all without any danger of being disappointed or suddenly let down — that he is hungry for. Obviously he must miss a large part of reality so long as he confines himself within these limits. Why does he do it?

Because he is a burnt child fearing all fires — the fire of emotion among others. Because he has been once so disappointed in what he took for reality, that he is obsessed with the dread of fakes. Because he is impatient and has no experience of the fruits rewarding long-continued or minute search for what is not at once obvious. Fortunately the child at this age may by his very desire for facts attain a closer comradeship than before with many of us fact-loving adults. As the love of fairyland fades like a silvery dawn the features of the everyday world become clearer and more significant to a child. And since most of us are unaware of the fairyland about us, we may find keen satisfaction in the growing comradeship of children even when the ethereal beauty of the dramatic passes away. Little children inquire about the universe, but children from eight or nine on seem often, like the rest of us, to forget the universe in order to learn about lawyers, legislators, bonds and banking.

be not already used for the multiplication of *Lagopus scoticus*, so much the better, as the interloper will earn the gratitude of his neighbours who pursue the practice.

The establishment of grouse on land where for some time previously they have not been preserved, or scarcely ever been seen, is a work of some difficulty. That it may be done has been proved over and over again, as witness the large head of grouse on many manors where there were formerly none or very few. But it is a matter requiring a far greater amount of care, attention, and experience than the introduction of pheasants or partridges upon a wooded estate or an ordinary manor. It is one, moreover, which requires considerably more *finesse* than most people suppose. Highland and the North-country keepers certainly bring a fair share of experience to work, but they bring as much tact and wiliness, which stand them in good stead in obtaining and keeping birds upon their lands.

Grouse to be turned down upon land must be obtained from places possessing similar characteristics of locality and climate to those upon which they are to be introduced —at least, as much so as possible, for unless they are, the likelihood is that a large percentage will fail to establish themselves. The first months of the year are the most favourable time for obtaining birds, and the autumn the next desirable. If in the former, the earlier the better, as there is then good opportunity offered the birds to mate quickly and remain. In autumn young birds may be obtained and turned away sufficiently early for them to learn the ins and outs and resources of their new lands. The birds are best conveyed to their destination late in the day, and liberated at dusk. Some food may be scattered around in case it be required at first. Of course, the difficulty is found in the securing and conveyance of the birds. There are many grouse-moors held as commercial

speculations rather than exclusively for sporting purpo[illegible] whose owners would be but too glad to earn the highly remunerative rates live grouse would bring them. The transportation is most easily effected in dark hampers and baskets; but as the birds will probably neither feed nor drink while confined, it is of paramount importance that the removal be as expeditious as possible. I would, however, rely far more on the hand-rearing of birds than on turning down, either for the nucleus of a head of game or for the increase of the present stock. They are moderately easily reared, and under any circumstances this is sure to be found the most practical mode.

The maintenance of a stock of grouse depends chiefly upon the assiduity with which vermin is killed down and upon the careful protection of the game from poachers, but also to a considerable extent on guarding the birds against the evils incidental to sheep-farming and on the periodical introduction of fresh blood in the shape of eggs brought from a distance, hatched out either under a hen grouse naturally or hand-reared and turned down. Moors will sometimes get game-sick, and the production of a superabundance of birds will often bring about an epidemic "disease," which will be set down to a dozen causes other than the right one.

they may easily reach and mingle with naturally-reared birds and learn the mysteries of grouse life. Broods of young birds so turned away should be visited every day or so, for a week or two, to make sure that they are thriving and not being killed off by vermin, &c. At first, perhaps, a few oats and wheat may be thrown down every morning, in case, owing to inexperience of wild life, they may not otherwise obtain a sufficiency of food.

I am inclined to the opinion that it would be possible to bring Red Grouse into a state of semi-domestication and obtain from them a large supply of eggs, as is done with pheasants. With Black Game it has proved satisfactory and easy of accomplishment, but for Red Grouse reliance is usually placed on bought or exchanged eggs to furnish the regular supply.

I now propose to give particulars and results of some carefully-pursued experiments made during the last two seasons in connection with the hand-rearing of Red Grouse. Speaking generally, it may be said that the system employed is based upon different lines from what has hitherto been adopted by those rearing Red Grouse by hand. The information is contributed by Mr. W. A. Nicholson, of Portobello, N.B., and I think we may regard this original information as a valuable addition to our knowledge of the subject. I give it in this gentleman's own words :—

"Individual efforts to hand-rear grouse have been attempted, and have proved fairly successful, but these have not been worked upon a large scale, and no practical system dealing with the matter has yet been put forward. For many years I have given the habits of the Red Grouse considerable study, and in the following pages a system of rearing the birds is described which has yielded very successful results, and that from the very first experiment undertaken. The first trial was conducted on a plot

of grass land on the sloping side of a hill facing the south west.

Twenty-four eggs were utilised, and fourteen chicks were hatched and successfully reared. This result was very encouraging to me, more especially as I had often read, and had been told, that grouse would not thrive without heather. The fourteen birds reared never as much as tasted that plant up to the day they were marked and released. Their food consisted principally of clover, grasses, seeds, and Spratt's No. 1 Grouse Meal, and spring water. A fortnight after hatching, the chicks became very partial to ants' eggs (so-called), and partook of large numbers.

Fourteen grouse were netted and housed in a large aviary, which was erected close to a fir-wood, with the object of providing shelter. The aviary enclosed high heather, bell heather, bleaberry, mosses, and soft grass, intermixed with a fair assortment of other less conspicuous moorland flora. The birds during the first week of their confinement were very restless, and at intervals approached close to the meshed sides of the aviary, making efforts to escape by endeavouring to fly up, which it may be stated they were unable to do, as each bird had the primary feathers of one wing cut. When I was approaching with food they hastened to conceal themselves under the long heather shoots, and would not partake of the supply until they imagined the coast was clear.

To remedy their aptitude for flying up, a boarding of wood was put around inside the enclosure, and against the netting, to a height of 3ft. They became more contented when this was accomplished, and soon settled down to their new surroundings. I mention this experiment to prove that the birds, if properly managed, will breed in captivity, because from that lot of birds I had thirteen eggs,

"Daddy," demands the stock-broker's daughter, "what do you do?"

"I sell securities."

"Well, what do securities secure?"

In this inquiring age a sensible and fearless teacher asked the children at school to write down in a notebook all the questions that puzzled them. From the ten-year-olds came:

"What are brains made of?"

"Why are there no square leaves?"

"Why do we cry when we feel sad?"

"What is fire?"

"Why is the sea salt?"

"Why are n't mountains warmer at the top than at the bottom, since they are nearer the sun?"

"What is temperament? I know what temperature is." And finally, the unexpected question:

"Why do negroes spit white not black?"

This is the age when dictionaries are needed at meal-times to feed the hungry mind which starves for more facts than all parents can give. Hunger for facts is, indeed, one of the great assets of the Angular Age. Rob's eyes sparkled as he opened the big box of the Book of Knowledge, and counted the picture-filled volumes. All that afternoon he pored over them. "Twenty volumes! There will be nineteen for me to read, for one is an index," he murmured as he went to sleep. Yet those books were distinctively lesson books — just what teachers are laboriously pressing into the soil. I wonder whether

all school might not be a book of knowledge full of pictures, adventure drama like this, with added chances for trying the physical experiments, building the wigwams and caves, acting the history and literature, using percentage to calculate the averages of baseball pitchers.

Hunger for facts sounds like scientific curiosity, and in an elementary form — the mania for collecting — children do anticipate the museums and catalogue specimens from which a knowledge of nature takes its start. The height of the collecting instinct is reached at about ten years. Accounts from several thousand children show it to be almost universal. Over ninety per cent of American children of both sexes collect something, the principal objects of delight being stamps, cigarette tags, and birds' eggs. Girls as one would imagine collect many fewer eggs and many more flowers, but they equal the boys in the variety and intensity of their lists.[1] There is no deep-plunging search at this age, but a good deal of superficial curiosity and acquaintances which take the form of swapping stamps and collecting various other rather meaningless things — trolley transfers, stones, cigarette-labels, samples, flowers, beads. Like any interest this collecting craze is now and then a seed of great price. In a few boys curiosity is the seedling of science. I cannot forget that Darwin himself was berated by his family as a worthless boy

[1] See an admirably planned investigation of Children's Collections by Caroline Burke in *Aspects of Child Life and Education*, by G. Stanley Hall.

because of his passion for "mere collections." Science means peculiarly a love of perfect accuracy that is the essence of righteousness. Science is humble, almost overwhelmingly so. It waits for the revelation of earth. It sees glory even in the raw, crude processes of nature. It bows before the lowliest stone.

Recognizing the trail that leads from the smallest curiosity to the greatness of science, it is the part of parents to widen the path and lure onward. Children themselves give us most of the clues we need to the best ways of helping them. Almost from the first week a morning-glory vine will show its desire to climb. If it has no support, it climbs on long blades of grass, rose-bushes, anything it can find. But if you twine it round a long string it likes that far better. So boys and girls start collections of anything and everything. They give us the theme. Can't we work out from it the whole sonata? Some of them at least would enjoy far more knowing the range of bird life than merely stealing birds' eggs, and yet we are often too slow or ignorant to connect the isolated desire for collection and for rudimentary classification with a permanent love and knowledge of birds. This same keen-eyed and provoking trait, curiosity, may be the beginning of a life interest. Mrs. Orderly came into the bathroom and found every bit of plumbing taken apart and scattered by her small son of seven. She was horrified at his mischief. He was calm and reassuring. "But, Mother, I know just how to put it all together again." And he did.

Athletic games and exploits are the central interest of the Angular Age, as imaginative games are of the Dramatic Age. Ambition clenches the teeth to succeed in swimming, diving, baseball, rowing, sailing, pole-vaulting. This passion is almost as fierce in girls as in boys. Looking back on her childhood a charming girl of nineteen writes: "During the self-assertive period I must have been a distinctly obnoxious youngster. I knew it all, I wanted to do what the boys did, I was noisy, slangy, and rude. This always surprises me in retrospect, for on the whole I think I was a rather quiet and sensitive child. But at that time nothing was worth while but muscular endurance, speed, perfection of the body in all sorts of tests of prowess and skill." The courage, the steadfastness, the genuineness, that go into efforts such as these make us reverence athletics. There is no sham about such attainments; they stand bare and exposed to reality. The standard of courage and perseverance that athletics quite coolly demands is no sinecure.

Lee puts this point: "A boy who is almost turning himself inside out in his efforts, but who fails in any point of the game, is spoken to by his companions with a severity which no grown person is sufficiently hard-hearted even to attempt. Strenuousness of effort is no palliation of his offence. There is no plea that 'little Johnnie did his best.' Good intentions don't go on the ball-field, the standard is inexorable." [1]

[1] Joseph Lee, *Play in Education*, p. 2.

In the presence of austere demands like this the condonation of children's faults by their elders has a kind of ignominy. Once I remember seeing the tables turned. Said Paul: "We're practising for the baseball team in our school. We ought to be the best players in school in our class, for Harold's only a millionaire and he can't play a little bit." I: "Did you teach Aunt Sarah to play baseball?" Paul: "Yes; she asked us to, you know, and Uncle Tom plays too. But Aunt Sarah likes to be praised for everything, she needs a lot of encouragement. Now Uncle Tom knows too much about the game for that. We praise him if he makes a really good play, but he does n't want us to praise him if he just catches an easy ball. And he does n't like it if we say, 'That was a fine try,' when he misses one." Dear old youngsters, they see through us like glass. What a double-sided, blindfolded game it is when we try to run them and they most kindly are giving us encouragement. Blessed be reality even when it hits hard at our weakness.

Athletics with its need of equipment often leads up to another characteristic of this age, the ambition to earn money. Through this ambition, desirable standards of thorough work can be kept up at a time when, without this human incentive, it might be difficult. About the age of eight Helen became interested in earning money. Phil, aged seven, was glad to imitate, but had less idea of its value and soon lost his purse. The children were paid fifteen cents a week for making beds and clearing up the room. Their mother found it wise to invert the process

occasionally, giving them fifteen cents and then requiring one cent for each slip for leaving things untidy. This giving back money, withdrawing it painfully from her beloved safe, was far harder for Helen than not earning it. She rebelled at first: "it was mean to make her"; but ten minutes later she agreed that it was more satisfactory to pay one's just debts.

This desire to earn ought to go along with doing many kind deeds without pay; otherwise there develops a mercenary spirit. I think paid work ought to be definite, regular, distinctly difficult (or easy, but distasteful to the child), showing results in output, exigent up to a standard. For example, do not pay for running upstairs for a handkerchief, carrying a message or doing an errand. Pay rather for work by the hour or job, as weeding a vegetable garden, making beds, or for catching fish and lobsters. Give both the instinct of earning and the instinct of spontaneous kindness free play at the same time. Here follows a dialogue that illustrates these points:

A., eleven: "I've simply got to earn some money to pay for the boom-crotch I lost. I haven't a cent to my name."

E. L. C.: "I'll give you a job and pay for it."

A.: "No, I ought not to take money for doing things for you; I'd like to work for the butcher. I could drive his team about and run errands."

But as the prospect of employment by Mr. Lamb-and-Beef seemed remote, she came back to me. "Can I earn some money by laying out the tennis court?"

E. L. C.: "Yes. I'll make a list of genuine jobs, things

I really need done, and pay you fair prices. Weeding, errands, mending, getting the mail from the village, supplying fish, berries, carrying in wood for the fire, sweeping the piazza, cutting the grass." The scheme was successfully carried out and the boom-crotch bought. "Would you pay me for not making a noise?" asked little brother seeing the possibilities of a large financial reward. "It's quite hard sometimes." I quenched his hopes: "No, I don't believe you'd want to be paid for *not* doing things that are inconsiderate."

Coming back to the question of pay and money values: to pay for *not* doing a mean or disliked thing seems to be bribery (corrupting legislatures!); to pay for unneeded, devised work is pauperism and felt as an ignominy if the child finds it out. It is like playing less well than you can at cards or tennis to let a child win. Pay must be, even with children or invalids, for something needed, something of market or individual value, and at standard rates. "I suppose it would n't be fair to be paid for climbing to the top of the pergola and training your clematis vines," said D. "It's great fun; we ought not to be paid for doing what we like, ought we?" "Why, yes," I told her to her great surprise. "It is fortunately quite apt to be the very thing we want to do that other people are most eager to pay us for doing."

I have described some of the characteristics of the Angular Age as if they were invariable. Yet even while

I write I see the faces of boys and girls of the age so serene, so gay, so considerate that all my description seems exaggerated or unfair. The truth is that some children pass through this period with no indubitable marks; in others character seems entirely changed. I have in mind two boys, both nine years old. One, formerly the gentlest and most imaginative of mortals, is now cantankerous in the extreme; the other, equally dramatic in his younger days, still keeps a sunny and open attitude and finds it not beneath his dignity to ask his friends for a kiss or to play at cave-dwellers. And if boys differ among themselves, even more do girls differ from boys. Girls are less violent and noisy, more cutting verbally, less prone to wrath and more to sadness. Their moods last longer than those of boys, but are less extreme at any time. Nevertheless girls are in some ways more like boys at this than at any later age, and indulge most often in the valiant, futile attempt to be exactly like them.

I recall a girl of ten, who, directed by her mother, embroidered a very pretty pincushion. "She did n't like to do it," her elder sister reported, "because it was n't manly. She says if she can't be a boy, she wants to do everything they do." Not only that! She wants to look as much like them as may be. Though still restrained, she desires nothing so much as a barber's shears to cut short her luxuriant nuisance of golden hair. "Daddy says I can have it cut off in five years if I still want to." Wise daddy! She scorns decorated dresses

and jewels and demands a smoke-gray flannel blouse and suspenders. "I have n't anything decent to wear," she declares, rejecting all her clothes as too fancy. Rowing, sailing, fishing, tennis, anything athletic — these are the only things worth while.

Yet, as I've said, even at this age girls are in the main very different parts of speech from boys. They may be Tomboys, but they never attain to be Dick and Harry boys. Mr. Lee characterizes all boys of this age as Big Injuns, and all girls as "*less so*." [1] His descriptions of the age are inimitable masterpieces, but he has not attempted to note the reactions that angularity dropped upon different children produces. And they are different! They take the Angular Age as they take measles, music lessons, or floggings — with a unique response. For example: Were there ever any normal girls bent on killing a comrade? Here follow the reminiscences of two well-bred boys literally "out for blood": "We felt a deadly hatred for Tom Bradford. He could not be borne. We set out on a deep-laid, determined plan to kill him. Years afterward I found in the garret a shield devised by me, with a barrel hoop to put my arm through attached to it. With this shield we were to defend ourselves against Tom's retaliation. We gathered together a hundred snowballs, iced them hard, and came out to meet him. There he was in the street. We hurled the first snowball and he fell unconscious. Another boy rushed out to congratulate us, but Tom's parents came

[1] Joseph Lee, *Play in Education*, p. 392.

and carried him off as dead." No repentance? Apparently none!

This is an extreme case. It could hardly have been planned by any ladies less ferocious than the Amazons. Yet I have much interesting documentary evidence of fights among girls. Here is one: "While walking home from school one noon I started to throw snowballs at a girl friend of mine. She objected very seriously and asked me to stop, which I did n't do. Finally she became enraged and sprang at me as a tiger does at its prey. We punched and wrestled for some time in the middle of the street, but finally the rest of the girls separated us. We both wore glasses. When we were pulled apart I saw her glasses lying near the sidewalk, so I picked them up and handed them to her. She immediately snapped them, blaming it onto me. That got me started again in pelting snowballs. By this time we had reached the corner where she went one way and I another." The writer comments: "I think it is second nature for boys to fight when in this age and so why should not girls fight? They might pick out a less public place than Anita and I did. When two children do have a fight I think it their parents' place to stay out and not interfere, even though it is some time before they make up, as was the case of this fight." In general, however, the weapons of girls are icy, stinging words rather than icy snowballs. And the result on the opponent, if also a girl, is usually tears, not blood. In the Angular Age the typical boy may be rough and noisy, the typical girl ruffled and pouty.

"All my regular faults came out twice as strong then. They were the same ones I have now, but much worse. I was scratchy, lazy, and irritable," said a girl who had long learned the game of laughing at herself. Boys at this time are swifter than girls in overcoming these moods. "Girls are so silly," jeers Hubert; "they quarrel and won't play for days and days. Boys always go on playing, and they never stay mad overnight unless the other boy is awfully grouchy."

Boys are far keener than girls in the desire to take apart and put together. Meccano, toy aeroplanes, wireless equipment, electric trains — you'd be startled to find your daughters absorbed for days in such as these. But girls share, to some degree at least, in the interests of wood and sea craft that are intermediate between art and science — lighting a fire in the woods, camp cooking, first aid to the injured, study of birds and plants. The organization of Boy Scouts cannot be entered till fourteen, but Junior Scouts, as one of my friends calls her group of boys and girls, will respond with alacrity to woodland arts, as well as to sailing, fishing, and swimming.

Summarizing what I have said, the central interest of the Angular Age is in athletics; next in importance come a curiosity for facts and a liking for ownership that lead to an embryo scientific knowledge and a storehouse of queer treasures from cigarette tags to seashells; and closely associated with the needs of athletic and scientific equipment goes a fairly persistent desire to earn money and live in the free country where treasures can still be

bought without price. But back of these interests is admiration for the man who excels in any or all of them, peculiarly for the man who excels in athletics or is skilled in the use of tools.

"A symptom of the presence in the Big Injun of the coming spirit of membership — and perhaps the most important to be recognized of all his traits for those whose business it is to deal with him — is his unlimited capacity for hero-worship. . . . He cannot as yet be loyal to a social group, but he can adore an ideal if presented in the concrete form of human personality. And he has a necessity of adoration: if he cannot find a Frederick or a Cromwell, he will take a Danton rather than go without. Boys a little older, at least the demonstrated heroic among them, are, to the Big Injun, a race of demi-gods. . . . There is no characteristic of his hero that is not reproduced as among the godlike attributes. . . . Small boys are often despised for toadying, and often their self-annihilation in the presence of their hero goes to extreme lengths, but what the attitude stands for is not mean. It is the heroic in their idol that commands them and their service to him is a true, though awkward, form of service. . . . So complete is the ascendancy of the hero during the Big Injun Age, and so generally is he chosen from among the successful athletes a few years older, that it may almost be said that the way to educate the Big Injun is to educate the boys of the succeeding age and let them do the rest." [1]

[1] Joseph Lee, *Play in Education*, pp. 324–25.

CHAPTER X

THE TREATMENT OF FIGHTS AND TEASING

BEHOLD the keys to the Awkward Age: athletics, scientific curiosity, desire and ability to earn in amateur ways, love of woodcraft, and an intense admiration for some master in these arts. Put against these the conspicuous puzzles of the Awkward Age: tendencies to fight, to plague people, to tease, to be lawless, untidy, and unmannerly. The first army of interest must attack the second. I will take up the problems one by one.

First there is the question, especially puzzling to mothers, of boys' fights. Here is an illustration. When Nelson, aged eight, is riding his new bicycle a little unsteadily, a big boy rushes out ahead of him and grabs the front wheel. "I say, you give me that bike for a ride." Poor Nelson relates the tale at home. He has been unable to resist. The bicycle is confiscated and the marauder rides it two blocks, the young owner tearing after it for fear it will never be returned. Father and mother consult. Father: "I must teach you more about boxing, Nelson. Why did n't you hit back?" Nelson, gently, "I did n't want to unless I had to." Father: "You ought to be more manly." Mother: "Oh! he is manly; even after he's been knocked down, he goes out to ride day after day just as gaily as ever. I know what I'll do; I'll ask the rough boys here and read them some

good, strong stories about brave engineers and firemen. Why, yesterday six boys attacked Nelson when he was all alone. They said they were the German army attacking the enemy. When I talked to them one by one they were nice boys, but they called him the enemy because he was the newest boy at school." "He ought to hit back," came laconically from the father. "Are you an Old Testament follower or a Christian?" I asked. "A Christian surely." "Then how can you reconcile loving your enemy, and turning the other cheek, with teaching Nelson to hit back?" "He's too young to understand turning the other cheek. He ought not to do it mechanically. It was his bicycle; he ought to defend it." "But if we put property rights ahead of doing good to them that hurt us, will any boy grow up with a Christian attitude?" The father was quite unmoved.

I was interested, for I thought he was partly right. The next time I met a group of four heads of schools, I told the story of Nelson. "What ought the father to have said?" "Hit him back!" shouted all but one in chorus. "And why?" Their reasons were different. "It is good for boys to get a thrashing"; "I know by experience; I brought my son up not to fight and it did n't work at all, for he was always put upon"; "I fought all the time as a boy. I can't see that it did me any good or any harm." "No," said the fourth, a fearlessly truthful teacher, "I was a coward, small and weak as a boy, and I never fought in my life, but I can't see that *not* fighting did me any harm. I don't believe it is

good for a boy to hurt another boy; the thrashing is all right, but it ought to be given by an older person. I don't encourage my school-boys to fight, but I often let it go on or let my masters encourage it."

Here are varied points of view! Fighting is good for boys; to be thrashed is good; fighting is just a temporary stage; it is neither good nor bad; the other boy's point of view is entirely impersonal to you, you battle as with a wave; and finally, never to fight may be harmless. Out of these statements what conclusions can we draw? The first and most important point is that a boy ought not to turn the other cheek until he is master of the situation. He must be generous or conciliatory from strength, not from weakness. Puffer, who knows many boys, generalizes thus: "The fighting instinct ought to die a natural, not an artificial death. . . . We shall do well to keep our fingers off the tares except when we are pretty certain we shall not root up also the wheat with them." [1] With this I essentially agree. A boy must fight unless, or until, he can deal with the situation in some other and more orderly way. He must show that he is not "too proud to fight" or too cowardly. But if he has capacity and leadership enough to get the difference settled in a reasonable way there is no gain in fighting. Barbarians can't reason and so must fight. Boys are often barbarians. But in time there comes an age and a gang that will listen and try to be fair — athletics in especial has taught respect for the rules of the game. Though some go

[1] J. Adams Puffer: *The Boy and His Gang*, p. 93.

on fighting beyond this time, boys who have made good with their crowd can at a certain point begin to make fighting seem ridiculous and low-bred.

Adventure with an element of risk and something humorous — most *teasing* includes one of these two elements. In its aspect of humor teasing seems to be one-sided joking. I can still feel in the roots of my hair an unpleasant sensation of childhood days. I sat with my parents in a front pew of the church gallery, my long hair, beautifully crimped for the occasion, hanging down to my knees. In the overflow pew just above me sat two mischievous brothers, and as the slow sermon went on, they bent quietly and tweaked hair after hair from my devoted head. When, goaded by the horrible little twitches of pain, I turned round on them, their pious young eyes were intent on the latest soul-searching phrase of the clergyman and totally ignored the wrath in mine.

How is teasing best treated? Here are the differing opinions of two mothers: "I find it wise to hold off rather than to stop teasing. I've come to the conclusion that I interfere too often. So now I wait till things go very far." At that moment: "Oh! Oh! Mother stop him! Teddy's tipping the boat over!" came a shriek from the lake. "Hit him over the head with your oar, Doris," retorted the mother with perfect calmness. "I don't allow teasing at all," was the answer of a gentler and distinctly a wiser mother. "It is not so much that I

think it wrong, as that there is always something better to do. Idleness is the cause of most teasing. I give the children plenty of occupation."

The real experts on the value of teasing are, however, children themselves. I lately asked two, "Is teasing good or bad?" "Good," said one child emphatically. "It knocks all the silliness out of you. You've got to get over having your feelings hurt." "I think it depends on the child," said the other, a little wistfully. "But I know I was *very* sensitive and it did me lots of good." And this is the usual verdict of the teased. As for the teasers, I have known them blush afterward at their remembered wickedness, but never at the time. Most boys pass rapidly from being teased to teasing and adapt themselves to both conditions. In so far as teasing removes the hothouse warmth that makes many of us absurdly sensitive to cold shoulders and stinging remarks, it is more than good, but pure daily misery is not stimulating. Teasing is good in proportion to the strength of the teased and unfortunately the weakest are apt to get the most.

Our part as elders can best be to arm the teasee. She has two main resources, indifference and the retort positive. All teasing falls flat if the person teased does not notice it. A jumping-jack that declines to jump is no kind of a toy! It is not any fun to tickle a rhinoceros. The retort positive, though apt to be somewhat feeble at first, may grow to be of value. In time it may become genuinely humorous and stingless.

There are, of course, times of physical danger or nervous strain in which parents must interfere protectingly, but usually they can best keep children too busy to tease, arm the teased with self-control, humor, and repartee, and as far as possible broaden the scope of the teaser, giving him more essentially artistic sources of fun.

The timid boy has a hard path to hoe in the Angular Age. He is behind the gang in athletic sports and in deeds of daring. When he goes in swimming, they jeer at him for keeping in shallow water; when he hesitates at a stunt they tease the life out of him. Naturally enough he lingers more and more at home, seeks grown-ups or pallid, saintly boys younger than himself, retires into stamp-collections, even slips into sewing and the society of girls. Treatment: Uncle's view, "Tease the life out of him till he is afraid not to do the stunts. Take him away from women; put him with men." Aunt's view, "Give him definite lessons in boxing and swimming. Give him success in at least one form of athletics." Take your choice of methods, shrewd parents, but know your boy well. The sturdy boy may be spurred by having it constantly dinned into him that he is a failure. I've heard of a very sick patient who got well because it made her obstinate when the doctor told her she was going to die. But in the majority of cases to see a slight but definite success is a greater stimulus to effort than to feel one's self worthless.

Never give up the game. If courage will not grow in

one direction, plant it wherever the boy has already a little hold and then help it to spread. I knew a boy of eleven absolutely terrified of the water. An older man took charge of him for a whole summer and definitely, patiently, humorously, but unflinchingly, kept him at swimming until it was mastered. The power to do this one thing well seemed the death-blow to cowardice. At sixteen he is entirely fearless, quite capable, indeed, of terrifying his parents.

The beginnings of courage may lie in a wholly different direction. The most timid boy I know has just entered the room. He is selling newspapers for the Suffrage Association and earning a portion of what he sells. He is to go up and down from house to house in Marblehead urging the inhabitants to buy. A certain assurance and a habit of going ahead day by day, whether one is afraid or not, is likely to come from such work. Perhaps later the same qualities can be transferred to games that require physical courage. Let a timid child realize in every possible way that he has already got courage; it is quantity or direction, not the quality itself, that he lacks. It is far more important to tell the timid child of his inch of courage than to dwell on his acres of cowardice. He knows those well enough. The baffling thing is to have no foothold.

The problems of lawlessness have been attacked with masterly understanding by Joseph Lee. Every lover of boys and every hater of boys ought to read his chapter

on "A Conflict of Ideals." The boy in the Big Injun stage, he tells us, is like a man feeling his way in the snow to find a solid ledge. The boy's lawlessness is not even a wish to abolish law. He is seeking something firm which will guide him to his own limits. His desire for freedom implies our desire for law. If there were no law, anarchy would have no meaning. If the grown-up yields to the boy's whim, he is no longer to be respected by lads who are themselves firm and dauntless to the core. And since all boys and girls are growing up in a world where they must conform to the institutions of society, must obey as well as command, there is no charity in slackness. Be genial, be humorous, keep little and big offences separate, but when you command mean and enforce your order.

The same principles apply to the treatment of untidiness and lack of manners. Of course we do not expect boys and girls at this period to be tidy and to have good manners. The surprising fact is that a few of them do. Alfred is ten and most of the time is the nail-booted, ball-throwing, horny-handed son of hard play. Yet he has never lost his love of cravats and in his nature a dramatic instinct of courtesy lingers. One night, with a very low bow, he kissed our hands before going to bed. "This," he announced, "is the way the Persian host says good-night." I recall a day when his mother sent him on an errand downtown and told him to wear a coat. "Well," he remarked sagely, "if I dress up part way, I want to dress up altogether." So he donned a high

spotless collar and a brand-new necktie. But blessed are they who do not expect a boy of this kind; they will not be disappointed.

Some parents tell me that in the Angular Age nothing you can do about cleanliness and courtesy is of the slightest avail. The change comes about sixteen. "Before this time there is no use speaking to him about his nails; after it there is no necessity." So Mr. Lee puts it. Yet there are frequent exceptions to this rule. Many girls are variably clean, many boys are not *invariably* dirty. One father told me this tale: His boy was intolerably dirty — addicted to dirt. At the age of ten he expressed an ardent desire for a blue suit. "Ridiculous," said the father; "he won't keep it clean a moment." The mother thought the game worth the risk; she bought the suit as a lure to cleanliness, and it worked. The boy keeps clean when he wears his blue suit; otherwise he reverts to the old type.

It is easy to give an impression of the Angular Age as all angles. It is not. It has among its interests a species of romance perching on a ledge somewhere near the border between the practical and the poetic. Such a border-land is one known as "Stove-Day." Stove-Day is as fixed a date as the opening of Harvard College. It occurs on the Tuesday after Labor Day, and never before. "Why, of course. If you try to make a stove earlier, no one will help you," says Sallie. But when the proper day comes all is changed.

Suddenly the bigger children, who have been sailing all summer, appear on the beach to help the littler ones. Bags of cement are bought in the village; great stones are dragged into place; stovepipes are begged, borrowed, or bought; clay is dug from chosen spots on the beach; bricks from sea or shore appear in surprising numbers; woodyards to hold driftwood are established; and the architecture of ovens begins feverishly. Children from five to fifteen take part, the older ones attempting now and again to earn an honest quarter by the sudden demand for labor. Scorn blurts out from a cynical older boy among the unemployed: "Well, you'd better put up a sign, 'This is going to be a fireplace.' Nobody would recognize it for one!"

At night the beach fires glow and smoke, while potatoes and toast blacken to delicious consistency. A spirit like that of the Lantern-Bearers possesses the children; stoves invade sleep and awake the soul at dawn. Not to be part-partner in a stove is to miss the joy of existence. Beauty creeps round the edges of some of the stoves in a circle of bright-colored pebbles for decorative purposes only, and gradually elaboration, the curse of civilization, makes the stoves larger, the stovepipes higher and higher. If stoves were not an early annual cut down by the frosts of late September, they might perish like Tyre and Sidon by a gorgeousness too great for human nature to sustain.

Contentedly with the smoke blowing in their eyes the children sit, enjoying a stove party. Potatoes blackened

an inch and a half are a "pièce de résistance," marshmallows the tidbits of the feast. I watched Marjory placidly buttering her potato; she scorned plate and knife; the butter was perched on her bare, sandy ankle, and she dipped it up with a stick. Shades of hygienic parents! It is well that you do not overshadow such a feast as this.

BOOK FOUR
THE PARADOXICAL AGE

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THE PARADOXICAL AGE

CHAPTER XI

MISHAPS OF THE UNHAPPY

THE Angular Age seems at the point of breaking into a happy time of teamplay when suddenly comes Early Adolescence, a period of bodily and spiritual bewilderment. It is easy either to overaccent or to underestimate the effects of this age. We hear spinsters and specialists sagely laying every wink of an eyelid to its account. Stanley Hall, in his imposing volumes, stretches Adolescence backward and forward till it covers the whole of youth; we begin to wonder whether the stars and the moon do not wax and wane under its influence. On the other hand, there is a group of writers on boys (Lee, Puffer, Gunckel) who almost ignore its advent. Their account of boys would lead one to imagine them all young Samsons.

The truth lies not so much between these two extremes as in their embodiment in individual cases or their alteration in a single person. Goethe undoubtedly felt the "Sturm und Drang" in a way that a prize-fighter would think ridiculous; Marie Bashkirtseff broods over sensations that the modern athletic girl

brushes healthily aside. Yet the period is, especially in girls, a critical and significant one.

"Of course you can't group girls accurately by ages," said an experienced principal of a private school for girls; "there are too many exceptions, but at twelve or thirteen there is often an extraordinary change in temperament. With little children I often spend half the morning in toning down enthusiasm. With those over eleven I spend the same time in rousing it. Even if the girls really enjoy a course of study they seem indifferent about it, or suppress their feeling. Often their interest has gone elsewhere and school is a bore. Adolescent girls don't know how to manage themselves physically or spiritually."

I will deal with their physical difficulties first, but the separation from the spiritual side of the period will not be complete in my pages, for it is not so in life. Adolescents can't handle their changed muscles and their high-strung nerves. They are clumsy in every way, they stumble about. Their brain does not seem to know the new body. I remember the years from thirteen to fifteen as dreary times. My arms and legs grew long, while my sleeves and skirts were still short. Maiden aunts had an appalling way of saying, "My dear, how you have grown!" They seemed to express both humor and horror at what I certainly could not help. If only maiden aunts would n't dwell on obvious personal peculiarities! One of them jocosely took my hand and, jeering, said,

"Just look at that wrist! Did you ever see anything like it?" I don't know now whether she thought my wrists too large or too small. They look normal enough to me. But for months I felt uncomfortable about my innocent wrists.

It was a self-conscious, unbeautiful time, bleak and bare with the emptiness of my tired body and spirit. Would it have been easier if I had known a little what it meant? I think so. I might have been told that it was a transitory period, that there was a way out on the other side, that all life was n't made up of that dark stretch of woods. I knew, bitterly, only that it was hard luck to be a girl, repeated hard luck, involving misery and lying to preserve appearances.

With my most intimate friend I walked every afternoon about the city streets. Our minds like our bodies were both excitable and weak — the paradox of this age and indeed of our age of the world, some think. We had n't any play left in us, and few inward resources. Therefore we were always wanting something thrilling to happen. The thrill took the form, usually, of finding a mysterious-looking letter on the hall table, or of having two ten-cent pieces to spend on candy. It seems to me now that candy filled a void in our souls rather than a physical vacuum in our stomachs. It represented joy in a joyless world, relief and self-forgetfulness in a desert of weariness. I was not ill enough to be interesting, but I was constantly tired. Even now I cannot see the fading petals of white magnolias without recalling the weight

of hot spring days when I walked down city streets with weary steps. The wilting and blackening of those great white leaves seemed to typify my own limpness of body and spirit.

This drooping in health is not exceptional. Hall, in "Adolescence," describes skin troubles, hangnails, freaky appetite as common. With this lack of calibre go other symptoms:

"Respiration, circulation, eating and swallowing, speech, common industries like sewing, ciphering, etc., lose precision and are perhaps more or less inhibited. Automatisms, like giggling, chewing the nails, twisting the hair or clothes, writhing, trembling and awkwardness in its many forms, . . . may appear. The sense of being observed more closely than usual or by strangers or numbers of people is paralyzing to the higher activities and may bring out primordial ones like crying, hiding, etc." [1]

When I come to describe the mental side of this period I find the same paradox which expresses its physical state — deficiency and excess as if (for lack of poise) it toppled about from side to side. The young adolescent is both fearful and rash, recalcitrant and downhearted. The Paradoxical Age we might call it. In the Dramatic Age the child is all of a piece — at one with himself. In his angularity at the next stage of growth he is still fairly uniform. But now all is civil war and contradiction both in health and spirits. Take

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. II, p. 371.

this in the emotional region — the adolescent is both timid and rebellious. I will try to show both sides fairly.

With the shoots of new self-consciousness new fears spring up. "I am awfully scared of Miss Davidson; I don't know what to say to her. And I blush and horrid prickles come on my cheeks. I'm scared about speaking pieces in school, too. She tells me to put my mind on what the poem is about, but it was such a dull verse I had to recite! It was written by a foolish man called Hezekiah Butterworth. It is a Jew name. Why could n't they let me call him H. Butterworth!"

Hall tells us that "the diffidence of some very genuine young men is almost incredible. They go far out of their way to avoid meeting a girl on the street who seems to them a being almost too worshipful to speak to. Others cannot go into society without the stimulant of some intoxicant to give them boldness." [1] A case of this latter kind was succinctly described by one boy: "When Hal goes to call on a girl he arms himself with two articles; a card in one hand in case she is out and a whiskey flask in the other in case she is in."

Now for the other side: most girls at least are, as I have said, overcome with lassitude; yet some observant parents and teachers report almost the extreme opposite traits. "From twelve to fourteen," wrote one mother (judging, I cannot but think, chiefly from her own flock), "girls are more like boys than at any other time. They are bumptious, uncontrolled, sure of their own opinions,

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. II, p. 371.

and full of a youthful emotional desire to help the poor. It takes courage to face right up to such girls, for parents at that time are decidedly back numbers."

Hall's returns confirm this verdict: "The wisdom and advice of parents is overtopped and in ruder natures may be met by blank contradiction. . . . The youth, who has been amenable to advice and even suggestion, now becomes obstreperous, recalcitrant, filled with a spirit of opposition and cannot repress a state of toplofty superiority to the ways and persons of his environment." [1] A teacher with wide knowledge of girls reports in somewhat the same way: "The average girl is uppish and feeling her oats. She is spirited and has begun to feel grown-up. She is crude in her ideas, critical of her teachers, easily rebellious. She hates her studies and copies the ways of boys." Here are the two opposing trends. Is either of them deeper and more fundamental than the other? I think not. Both are symptoms of instability. Yet it often seems as if the weakness was more veritable than the strength. When I hear teachers generalize on an age of such variable experience, an age of shifting winds and weather, I recall the comment of a wistful girl: "Teacher says she knows me down to the ground. I only wish I knew myself!" For back of the uppishness is often down-heartedness and back of the cock-sureness an almost morbid desire to agree. Is it not true that the more brash and boastful a young soul or a young state shows itself, the more it is at heart un-

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. II, pp. 79, 80.

certain of itself? Greatness that is secure is silent. The very insecurity of the young demands aggressiveness. It wants you to be sure that it is great and finds it necessary to tell you so repeatedly.

Often, indeed, youth is reassuring itself, not you; it puffs itself up to counteract what Hall well calls its collapsing moods; moods even of entire self-effacement. "One form of sensitiveness common in adolescents expresses itself in an extreme reluctance to dissent from the opinions or purposes of others, especially adults. Sympathy is so quick and ready that all the mental energy is expended in trying to get into the closest rapport with alien sentiments, and self-assertion is for a time almost in abeyance." [1]

But against all this appearance of endless lassitude we must balance the adventurousness and law-breaking gusto of boys, the advancing love of beauty, art, and religion in both sexes. For Adolescence is as paradoxical in action as in feeling, in the extremes of right- and wrong-doing as in the heights and depths of its moods. Take some of its worst first: It is a time when criminal statistics show a great increase. What we still call crimes may be due to reckless sailing in the sea of adventure on the one hand, or to a physical depression in which the ship, with loosened sails and weakened rudder, can no longer be steered away from rocks. Wrong-doing in Adolescence has always one or other of these characters — it is unguided energy or it is a lack of energy in

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. II, p. 374.

which drifting is almost inevitable and the pull of stronger comrades irresistible.

Jane Addams shows that the crimes of a large number of boys of this age began in love of adventure. "They have developed no capacity for recreation demanding effort or even muscular skill, and are obliged to seek only that depending upon sight, sound, and taste." [1] So they loop the loop amid shrieks of joyful fear — drift into saloons, or moving-picture shows, taste of the mystery and excitement of taking cocaine. She tells of one instance where a group of boys were tempted by samples of cocaine given them by a colored man. Gradually the habit formed and at the time they were arrested they were spending eight dollars a night for cocaine and inevitably had to steal to get the money.

Girls, too, love excitement. Two girls found in Chicago were definitely trained by older women to steal purses and merchandise, pick pockets, and even open tills in shops. All the money they secured was given to the older women; the only reward the girls had was an occasional spree. But love of adventure and the gaiety of the shopping district kept them at their task.[2]

Not love of adventure alone is a cause of wrong-doing in this period. Its recklessness is well described by Tolstoy as close to despair. He tells, in "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth," [3] of failing utterly in history which he hated. Still irritated and depressed by his

[1] Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, p. 63.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[3] Page 153.

failure he is sent by his father to get some cigars and bonbons from a locked case in his private room. As the boy enters the room he is seized by a desire to know what the smallest key in the bunch will open. He finds it fits an embroidered portfolio, and he does not resist the temptation to read his father's private papers. After a few minutes, ashamed and uncomfortable, he tries to relock the portfolio, when suddenly with a snap the key breaks and half of it remains in the lock. There is no hope of concealing his deed. The thought of the bad mark in history rushing over him, blends with this new disgrace. "What have I done? Oh! what will become of me?" he cries aloud. And then a mood of reckless despair invades him. He joins the family, he enters wildly into the games and intentionally catches and tears the dress of the governess in order to make the little girls laugh. "I was in the state of excitement of a man who has gambled away more than he has and who fears to reckon up his accounts and continues to bet on desperate cards for the purpose of not giving himself time to think. I felt inclined to create an uproar, to do some manly deed that would astonish them all." [1]

Tolstoy analyzes this experience: "I have read somewhere that children from twelve to fourteen years of age, that is to say those who are in the transition stage of boyhood, are particularly inclined to arson and murder. In recalling my boyhood, and especially the frame of mind

[1] *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, p. 157; translated by Isabel F. Hapgood.

I was in on that unlucky day, I very clearly appreciate that the most important crime may be committed without object or intent to injure, but from curiosity and to meet an unconscious need for activity."

"When St. Jerome [the tutor] came downstairs and told me that I had no right to be there that evening because I had behaved badly and studied badly, and that I was to go upstairs at once, I stuck out my tongue at him and said that I would not leave that spot.

"'Very well,' he said, 'I see that nothing but the rod will make you mind,' and he seized me by the hand. But I no sooner felt the touch of his hand than, beside myself with rage, I tore my hand away and struck him with all my childish strength.

"'Let me alone!' I shrieked; 'not one of you loves me nor understands how unhappy I am. You are all hateful, disgusting!'" [1]

Kicking and protesting the boy is locked into a garret. Left alone there, heroic pictures of self-crowning, self-pitying boyhood throng upon him. Every one hates him; there must be a cause for this. Ah! evidently he is a foundling. He will depart forever from his father's house. He will become the glorious hero of war; thanked by the Emperor for his heroic deeds he will only ask for the death of one enemy, St. Jerome. Or, a more pathetic alternative, — he will be found dead in the garret and all the family will mourn him.

Have not all of us dreamed such piteous dreams, when

[1] *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, pp. 159, 160.

remote from our sources of strength, suddenly isolated from the love of God and man, we feebly try to build a worthy palace to shelter our naked spirits? Tinsel palaces they are that crumble overnight, but for the moment they shelter us from the racking storm of despair. No punishment can help any boy thus morally shattered. He tries in his crude way to build up a false haven of fancy; you must be to him a true haven of trust and love. Just because he is unworthy of trust he must be trusted. Nothing but trust will make him trustworthy.

You say that in such a boy there is nothing worthy of trust. Yet even at this time the boy was planning for his future life, meditating on immortality and the conditions of happiness. "Once the thought occurred to me that happiness does not depend upon external conditions, but on our relations to them; that man after he is accustomed to endure suffering cannot be unhappy; and in order to accustom myself to labor, I held Tatischef's Lexicon for five minutes in my outstretched hands in spite of dreadful pain."[1] Buried in this moody, erratic, disagreeable boy was the great, loving Tolstoy of future years. How easily, if we had been masters of the world, might we have thrown away as worthless during the time of adolescence this noble tool of the Lord.

The degree of *permanent* harm that this sort of moody recklessness leaves behind it depends largely on the

[1] Tolstoy, *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, p. 179.

degree of vigor and momentum in the individual boy or girl. A fast-moving wheel easily sweeps past its "dead point"; a fast-moving bicyclist keeps his balance. But slow the process down, stick at any one point, and disasters are imminent. Vigor — communicated by the lives of our parents and friends — vigor gradually re-accumulated as health improves on the other side of the adolescent period, is the saving force.

Meantime our first usefulness to such youth is understanding. Here Tolstoy is our master. Does not this description call up half-forgotten memories when the will was weak and the plans of life unformed? "At one of these moments, when with lesson in hand, you busy yourself with a promenade up and down the room, endeavoring to step only on one crack in the floor, or with the singing of some incoherent air, or the smearing of the edge of the table with ink, . . . I [Nicolai] stepped out of the schoolroom and went down to the landing without any object whatever."[1] Then he heard his older brother Volodya's fooling with the pretty maid, and all at once a restless, pointless curiosity came over Nicolai and he spent hours on the landing listening to the noises in the maid's room.

This vague and illicit curiosity was linked dangerously with an estrangement from the viewpoint and the interests of his own sister and her friend, Katenka. These girls now seemed changed. They were full of airs, graces, and secrets; with the move to Moscow he no longer shared

[1] Tolstoy, *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, p. 135.

with the girls the games that had been daily events in the country. Nicolai began to watch the girls like an outsider. He noticed that when guests were present Katenka loved to promenade in the hall arm in arm with another girl; she declared that she hated men and would never marry, yet she behaved entirely differently when men were about and seemed afraid. Not understanding all this he began to scorn the girls. "They don't know anything; they can't discuss questions; they are sentimental and hypocritical."

By a kind of primitive instinct girls and boys keep apart at this period. The separation of their interests is common in the early teens. "At this age, by almost world-wide consent, boys and girls separate for a time, and lead their lives during this most critical period more or less apart, until the ferment of mind and body which results in maturity of functions . . . has done its work. The family and the home abundantly recognize this tendency. At twelve and fourteen, brothers and sisters develop a life more independent of each other than before. Their home occupations differ as do their plays, games, tastes." [1]

But this separation, though it may palliate, certainly does not cure the ills I am describing. Time and the enveloping affection of understanding parents is the best safeguard thrown around this critical period. Probably we would not abolish it, like a disease, even if we could. It has its own visions and lessons. Parent and friend are

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. II, p. 617.

at hand chiefly to see that the hard-pressed soul does not get off the track or utterly run down.

It is another of the paradoxes of Adolescence that new temptations and sins alternate with new desires to be supremely good, utterly self-sacrificing. Long afterwards I heard a girl say that throughout this time she knew herself to be quite worthless, and therefore resolved secretly that her aim in life should be *to avoid being a nuisance.* A pathetic aim enough for the dawn of life! From what I have heard it seems that she carried out her plan not wisely but too well. She lacked decisiveness, too rarely expressed her own opinion, agreed with others or submitted to their will to the point of satiety. But it was all in an heroic effort to be saintly and to get rid of self. Curious this desire! It is so inevitably linked to self-centredness, so often goes along with total blindness to the suffering of others.

Who can forget how Stevenson in "Old Mortality" describes wandering alone into a city graveyard just to be unhappy in the time of hot fits of youth; reading day by day the transient records of the dead, seeing himself as dead, and his the virtues on these tombs; centred in an engrossing self-pity? Out of his solitary brooding he is roused by a passing emotion of sex — a housemaid flirts with him from the window of a hospital. "And yet," he says, "I cared as little for the housemaid as for David Hume. The interests of youth are rarely frank, his passions, like Noah's dove, come home to roost. . . .

It is only in the course of years and after much rubbing with his fellow-men, that he begins by glimpses to see himself from without and his fellows from within; to know his own for one among the thousand undenoted countenances of the city street, and to divine in others the throb of human agony and hope.

"In the meantime he will avoid the hospital doors, the pale faces, the cripple, the sweet whiff of chloroform — for there, on the most thoughtless, the pains of others are burned home, but he will continue to walk, in divine self-pity, the aisles of the forgotten graveyard. The length of man's life, which is endless to the brave and busy, is scorned by his ambitious thought. He cannot bear to have come for so little. He cannot bear, above all, in that brief scene, to be still idle, and by way of cure, neglects the little that he has to do." "Pity him the more, if pity be your cue, for where a man is all pride, vanity, and personal ambition, he goes through fire unshielded." No one with much experience, or with medical knowledge, can read this description without realizing how near is this morbid state of mind to melancholia.

A similar state of mind in an older or in a decidedly younger person would (medical authorities agree) be really serious. But for parents the main prop of courage and patience should be the fact that in Adolescence there is hardly any degree of moral flabbiness and mental vacancy which time cannot cure. The physical and spiritual energies sputter and flicker as if they were

about to go out altogether. Despite flashes of fitful energy the whole creature often seems incompetent. Often we are at the end of our resources in the endeavor to help. But what we are powerless to change soon "changes itself" by processes utterly unknown to us, their mystery cloaked in the familiar jargon about "outgrowing" or the healing of time.

CHAPTER XII

ESCAPE AND HOMESICKNESS

I HAVE phrased adolescence again and again in terms of paradox. Once more I am drawn back to the same word as I think of the simultaneous homesickness and home-shunning characteristic of many adolescents. Just when they most need their homes (and they know it too) they are itching to run away. Kline found that eighty per cent of the one hundred and sixty-six cases studied by him were homesick for the first time between twelve and eighteen.[1] Yet love of adventure, a passion for running away, is even more imperative at this time. Is it not more than possible that the two desires are not opposed? Youth flies not so much from its home as *from itself*, and finding itself still present wherever it goes, it would return. For the home of the spirit is not found; it is created.

Jane Addams tells of a boy who between the age of eleven and fifteen travelled almost round the world. He lived six months in Honolulu; and returning to Chicago was arrested for vagrancy. The judge befriended him and got him a job, but the wandering impulse was too strong and away he went, vaguely planning to follow Roosevelt into Africa. Wisely Jane

[1] Quoted in G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. II, p. 381.

Addams writes of the crimes of this period: "In the life of each boy there comes a time when these primitive instincts [1] urge him to action, when he is himself frightened by their undefined powers. He is faced by the necessity of taming them, of reducing them to manageable impulses just at the moment when, in the words of a veteran educator, it is almost impossible for an adult to realize the boy's irresponsibility and even moral neurasthenia. That the boy often fails may be traced in those pitiful figures which show that between two and three times as much incorrigibility occurs between the ages of thirteen and sixteen as at any other period of life. . . . To set the boy's feet in the worn path of civilization is not an easy task, but it may give us a clue for the undertaking to trace his misdeeds to the unrecognized and primitive spirit of adventure, corresponding to the old activity of the hunt, of warfare, and of discovery." [2]

What are the motives of this impulse to wander in spring-time? Among the motives for running away Kline's statistics show: hurt feelings, love of nature, desire to be alone, rebellion against authority, boredom, a desire to show one's mettle and to see the world.[3] Yet however strong is the desire to run away from the familiar, however inevitable that children will find the familiar things strange and jarring, I believe that in most

[1] Need of food, leading historically to hunting and commerce and need of a mate.

[2] Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth*, p. 52.

[3] Kline, "The Migratory Impulse *vs.* Love of Home," *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. x, pp. 1–81.

cases it is wise to tide over these years in old and established surroundings.

A knowledge of the child deeper than that which is revealed in his own consciousness, comes to us out of the combination of memory and maturity. Adolescence keeps sprouting questions it can't answer, fragmentary ideas, distracted purposes which postpone their own solution. The use of growing up is in part to understand and to answer by memory and by imagination these crude ideas in the lives of our children. We can be of no greater use to them than in this — provided always we keep close to the novelty and unexpectedness of their development. We have been startled to discover how common and tragic it is at the period to think one's self only an adopted child. Depression and the sense of not being loved again and again takes this form. Does it not go to prove that a warm affection at home — and not transplantation — a familiar and friendly background — not new scenes — is what children most need from us at this time? Perhaps I feel this need with peculiar strength because my own loneliness at thirteen was much intensified by my being sent, at this critical age, to a new school where there were none of my childhood friends. Children and plants who are growing fast don't stand transplantation. They need the old soil, the familiar and loyal comrade.

When the animals went into Noah's ark there were n't any, apparently, who did n't pair off; no solitary mouse or kangaroo was left alone. All the girls at our school

paired off every day at recess. Arm in arm they promenaded together, tittering and twining. But I did n't belong to any pair; I had come in from the country two months after school began and the girls were all engaged months ahead to walk with one another at recess. Just one older cousin wrote and asked me to walk with her once a week. I've blessed her ever since. But the other four days I was a pariah; I wandered alone, pierced by critical eyes and laughing voices. If I crept away to a remote room and tried to stay indoors unobserved through the recess-time, a well-meaning teacher would discover me and insist on the hygienic value of air and exercise. But it is n't hygienic to quiver with shyness as you walk the streets alone, surrounded by pure air and stimulating exercise. As a second best resort, I had to assume that I needed something from my own house and walk home and back during recess hours. It was n't so bad to be alone when I was out of sight of the pairs; though it's difficult, of course, to make out that you've left something important at home every day!

The whole experience was intrinsically small enough, but curiously poignant, and quite unnecessary. I suppose it might have been painful in some degree at any age, but at that age a girl can suffer and never forget the pain of it. Years afterwards, in teaching ethics, I asked, "What acts require moral courage?" A shy, unpopular girl answered, "It takes courage to go out all by yourself at recess." Back surged my own well-remembered

miseries and I took pains that my shy pupils should be provided with companions.

In my case the change to a new school was a minor event. But when a sudden and important change comes at Adolescence, then it leaves a scar or a crown embedded as by tatooing on the character. Mary Antin, the Russian Jewess, transplanted at twelve to the Promised Land of America, beheld as new a world as ever Columbus found. "All the processes of uprooting, transportation, replanting, acclimatization, and development, took place," she writes, "in my soul. I felt the pang, the fear, the wonder, and the joy of it. I can never forget, for I bear the scars. . . .

"I was at a most impressionable age when I was transplanted to the new soil. I was in that period when even normal children, undisturbed in their customary environment, begin to explore their own hearts, and endeavour to account for themselves and their world. And my zest for self-exploration seems not to have been distracted by the necessity of exploring a new outer universe — I embarked on a double voyage of discovery, and an exciting life it was! . . . I could no more keep my mind from the shifting, changing landscape than an infant can keep his eyes from the shining candle moved across his field of vision." [1]

"What had come over me? Why was I, the confident, the ambitious, suddenly grown so shy and meek? . . . Why did I, a very tomboy yesterday, suddenly find my

[1] *The Promised Land*, Introduction, xiv. Houghton Mifflin Company.

playmates stupid and hide-and-seek a bore? I did not know why. I only knew I was lonely and troubled and sore, and I went home to write sad poetry. I shall never forget the pattern of the red carpet in our parlor . . . because I lay for hours face down on the floor writing poetry on a screechy slate. . . . I gave up the dancing club, I ceased to know the rowdy little boys, and I wrote melancholy poetry often and felt better. . . . I read much and mooned between chapters." [1]

Mary Antin also wrote long letters to Miss Dillingham, one of her teachers in the Boston public schools. "For some time I wrote to her almost daily. That was when I found in my heart such depths of love as I could not pack into rhyme. And finally there came a day when I could utter my trouble in neither verse nor prose, and I implored Miss Dillingham to come to me and hear my sorrowful revelations. . . . Would she?

"She was a devoted friend, and a wise woman. She met me on Boston Common. It was a gray autumn day — was it not actually drizzling? — and I was cold sitting on the bench, but I was thrilled through and through with the sense of the magnitude of my troubles, and of the romantic nature of the rendezvous. Who that was even half awake when he was growing up does not know what all these symptoms betoken? Miss Dillingham understood, and she wisely gave me no inkling of her diagnosis. She let me talk and kept a grave face. She did not belittle my troubles — I made specific

[1] *The Promised Land*, p. 274.

charges against my home, members of my family and life in general; she did not say that I would get over them, that every growing girl suffers from the blues; that I was, in brief, a little goose stretching my wings for flight. She told me rather that it would be noble to bear my sorrows bravely, to soothe those who irritated me, to live every day with all my might. She reminded me of great men and women who have suffered, and have overcome their troubles by living and working. And she sent me home amazingly comforted, my pettiness and self-consciousness routed by the quiet influence of her gray eyes searching mine.

"This, or something like this, had to be repeated many times, as anybody will know who was present at the slow birth of his manhood. From now on, for some years, of course, I must weep and laugh out of season — stand on tiptoe to pluck the stars in heaven, love and hate immoderately, propound theories of the destiny of man, and not know what is going on in my own heart." [1]

Clearly this account sums up much that I have detailed in the earlier part of this chapter — the shyness, the loneliness, the vague sorrows, the surgings of revolt, the hunger for thrills, all are here — also the beginnings of religious impulse which George Eliot and many others have described at this age. As to Mary Antin there came at Adolescence the great sea-change to a glorious new and strange America; so George Eliot, in "The Mill on the Floss" pictures Maggie Tulliver going

[1] Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*, p. 275.

through the ordeal of her father's bankruptcy. George Eliot writes with a tenderness born of vivid memory, as she faces Maggie's longing for an explanation why all this sordid pain should have come to her.

"She rebelled against her lot, she fainted under its loneliness, and fits even of anger and hatred toward her father and mother, who were so unlike what she would have them to be — toward Tom, who checked her, and met her thought or feeling always by some thwarting difference — would flow out over her affections and conscience like a lava stream, and frighten her with a sense that it was not difficult for her to become a demon. Then her brain would be busy with wild romances of a flight from home in search of something less sordid and dreary; she would go to some great man — Walter Scott, perhaps — and tell him how wretched and clever she was, and he would surely do something for her." To Maggie, as to many a hungry girl at that restless age, an outlet came through religion. She found Thomas à Kempis her anchor against the storm of self-pity. The disappointments of the newly discovered world may lead us at this time inward to our own ideas. In books and in day-dreams we escape from strain.

Some girls complain of the burden of learning algebra and Latin at this age. I did n't mind lessons; I was busy then, and the lessons behaved well enough, but the burden of my shy loneliness grew heavier every day. The easiest refuge was to curl up in a big armchair and read for hours. I was proud of the *amount* of my reading,

and kept an account of pages. It went up into the tens of thousands every summer. But even my big green armchair was n't safe from intrusions. "Get up, dear, and give the armchair to Uncle Tom," some older member of the family would say, and I dragged myself wearily out, knowing in my soul that Uncle Tom did n't need a comfortable chair half so much as I. But the security and quiet of this sort of retirement does not help to make us comprehensible to our fellows. We find very little to say and few words to say it in. For the difficulties of the Paradoxical Age are complicated by its *inarticulateness*. It rarely finds words till later, but one girl of thirteen described its problems well when she said, "Oh! it's awful! You're neither hay nor grass."

Reserve held me firmly in its clutches through this period. I kept all my feelings to myself — yet I was not quite without desire for an audience, for I *confided* them, as the clever expression puts it, to a little red-leather notebook. It is an experience somewhat between laughter and shame to read over such a record. I was steeped and oozing with religious sentiment; I wrote elegiac poetry like a second Gray; I copied long extracts of sermons by undistinguished preachers. How touched they would have been to know my ardor! Shy and reserved with every one, except in hours of talk with an intimate friend sheltered by the darkness on our slow way to sleep, I longed for sacrifice — secret now, but surely to be discovered at my tragic death. I had a faint, recurrent picture, ridiculous in its pathos, of how

the noble sentiment of my hidden poems was to reveal to my family what a treasure they had lost. Does nearly every boy or girl weep a tear or two over his or her own unlikely death, I wonder? It was not that I had any idea whatsoever of disease; it was only that "death brought one out," so to speak. It was needed to distinguish me clearly from the rest of a large, happy family.

There is a perverse fashion nowadays of treating the adolescent's religion as mere morbidness because it surges up at a time of physical instability and unrest. One might as well call a wood fire mournful and morbid because the physical basis of its ruddy brilliance is a transition that looks merely destructive in its end. If we are fair-minded we must appraise the products of adolescence each on its own merits. We behold an enormous physical reconstruction with its naturally attendant havoc; also an enhanced vitality in our perception of life's background. The eternal and infinite reaches of existence touch us both before and after adolescence. But we wake up to them just then. Often we slumber again, as soundly as the humming top, as soon as active, busy life begins to whirl us — at the end of this period. But the whirling dervish, like the humming top, is asleep as far as spiritual life goes, and in some ways the "busy" life we call normal is as vacant as the dervish. There is a morbidness of health. "Healthy-mindedness" often means that we forget the sins and sorrows around us; that we never think of past or future more

than a few minutes at a time; that we are unaware of beauty and of shame.

Perhaps the "morbidness" of Adolescence has in one aspect its own sanity and health. It is a time when we know what is great and what is small, even though we are too bewildered to orient ourselves in the face of these stupendous verities. At any rate, the morbidness must be understood before it can be helped. For this reason I insert here a few out of many descriptions by young women of eighteen or nineteen of the Paradoxical Age as they recollect it:

"The period that stands out most clearly in my life is from eleven to fifteen. At this time I never seemed to know what I was doing and I did n't care. Most older people, especially those who had much to say about my behavior, bored me and worried me to death. I had awful spells of depression, especially over my long, lanky ugliness which my elders seemed to take delight in teasing me about. Studies seemed to be one of my greatest bugbears. I longed to be as bright as my oldest brother, but had no desire to work for knowledge, and I am afraid I flattered myself by thinking it would come naturally. I loved music above all things, but when it was time to practise I hated it. All I seemed to think of was being out of doors, and though forbidden I often roamed the streets with other girls for lack of something better to do. The drug-store confectionery shop seemed to be my one and only resting-place, as it afforded not only food but companionship.

"I can remember thinking I was an adopted child. Every one remarked how funny it was I had red hair when both my father and mother had dark hair. Then one day my sister teased me and said something about my being only an adopted child. That made a deep impression on me and really made my life quite miserable."

"I cannot remember any particular thing that happened during my adolescent age, but I can remember my general feelings and attitude of life.

"I remember when I was practising on the piano, if I did n't play it just right the first or second time, I would fly into a nervous state. I would sometimes bang the piano, and at other times cry and cry. Then, when I would try and play again, I would be in such a nervous state of mind that my fingers would tremble, and I would play worse than ever and almost cry again, and walk away from the piano hoping never to see it again.

"Another feeling I had then was jealousy. I imagined that my mother liked my brother much better than she did me. When she would scold me for doing anything, I would say, 'You don't scold brother for doing that; now he just did something as bad as I did, and you did n't say a word to him.' And for a year or two I had that feeling that she never scolded my brother, but was always scolding me.

"Sometimes when we were at the dinner-table my brother and I would begin to talk foolish and begin to laugh. I would then act silly, doing things I should n't

and get very hysterical. I would then act worse and laugh and laugh, so I could n't eat and would be sent away from the table. That would give me the jealous feeling again, and I would think my brother as much to blame as I was, which he was n't."

"At the age of twelve I was just becoming conscious that I was very large for my age, and it seemed to me that every motion was one of awkwardness.

"My sister, who was nine years older than I, seemed to take delight in saying cutting things to me. These things, although I showed no outward sign, hurt me deeply, and often I would go to my room and weep. Then some nights when I went to bed, I would think over the happenings of the day, and if I had been reprimanded in any way, I would think that I was n't loved and would often have a very restless night. I was teased a great deal by members of the family. This bothered me greatly. If I were to dance with a certain little boy more than once in an afternoon at dancing-school, the family would proceed to tease me. On the whole it seems as if I was in a most unhappy mood at that period. Everything bothered me and I was very touchy."

"I have strong memories of being a very rebellious child from twelve to fifteen years, and one of the things which used to make me so very rebellious was that I had very decided opinions about the different girls in school, and ones which never seemed to agree with mother's.

I never failed to want to play with this girl or that girl, A and B, who were evidently ones that my father and mother did not care about having me play with, and I remember very distinctly using my temper strongly, and saying many things which I was sorry for afterwards. Another thing, one time I was to be allowed to go with mother to meet a friend. I wanted to wear one hat and mother wanted me to wear another. I immediately said I was going to wear the one I wanted to, and putting it on I went out of the house saying I was n't going to the station, I was going out never to return. I went for what seemed to me a long, long walk, wandering on streets I had never heard of or seen. I had really been gone but a short time, but the lonesomeness grew unbearable and I returned inside of two hours to find that mother had not waited for me as I had expected, but had gone to the station alone."

"During my adolescence I did not feel that I was alone in the world and unappreciated by my family. I knew that my family loved me dearly and more than appreciated me. My great sorrow lay in my belief in the resurrection of the dead. I felt that one life was enough for me and perhaps too much. When I died I wished to be absolutely nothing, to have no soul with which to feel joy or sorrow. I was tired, tired, tired of life, yet I knew I must lead my life and lead it cheerfully and I feared that I should always have to lead some kind of life. My wish was that I had never been born.

"I think one reason for this was the amount of studying I had to do. I was taking a college preparatory course which necessitated my having more subjects than I should have had. I had so much to do that I could n't do anything well and it kept poor me in a muddle.

"Otherwise I led a very happy, healthy life. I was fortunate in having simple, sincere, thoughtful girls as companions. There were four of us who were constantly together and we all loved literature, music, the theatre, etc., and always discussed them as well as religion, morals, etc., together. These friendships have been and are among the very best things of my life."

"I remember that when I was between thirteen and fifteen I passed through a very melancholy period of existence. It was n't really living, it was merely existing. Problems rose in my mind of which I now remember only one especially well. It was a question which haunted me, 'What is life?' I was in despair over it and I did n't dare ask any one for fear of being laughed at or not understood. I was sent to a girls' camp both those summers, and a more miserable person I 'm sure there never was. Everything was indigo to me. I was so homesick that I could not eat or sleep, but I was not allowed to come home, for the sake of discipline, I suppose. As I look back on it now, I guess it was a good thing, but at that time I thought it very cruel. I think that my mother did not realize how keen my suffering was or she

would not have made me stay. I was very sensitive and craved affection, but neither of my parents was in the least demonstrative. I knew that they loved me and would do anything for me, but the evident affection was lacking. I had no sooner come through this stage than the 'religious wave' rolled over me; but I was sixteen then and was really beginning to wake up intellectually."

"I think, that in the years from twelve to fourteen, I cared more for nature. We lived in the country and I not being well did not go to school, but had a governess during those years; and as we lived away from the town, my brother being away at school, there were only older people for me to associate with. I loved to walk in the woods, to go out in all kinds of weather, to race and run in the fields on a windy spring day, or go on the hilltops on a glorious day in autumn. I have always been fond of nature, and the colors in the trees and landscape thrilled me. I never studied flowers or birds in particular, but I just loved to stand and look at beautiful scenery. The sunsets and twilight were always delightful to watch, also the sunrise in summer. I was full of it; I wanted to write down all I saw and felt. I have always felt the beauties of nature, but cannot express them in words; which I always wish I could, for I would be so full of them it seemed as if I would break if I could not write them down. Still even now I adore outdoors and all forms of nature."

"The only thing that I can remember about this period in my life is that I was sure my family did n't love me. I was positive that they did n't understand me and I used to feel dreadfully mistreated. I sometimes felt that if only I could be terribly sick or die, then they would be sorry. It used to give me great consolation to think about it. I was very fond of reading and got a great deal of comfort out of books during this time."

Here are a few of the girls' own suggestions as to how they could have been helped:

"Children when they are at the adolescent age should be held very close to their parents. If the mother can get her children's confidence then, she is sure to keep it. I think if my mother had ever shown a desire to laugh or to put my questions aside, I never would have confided anything to her or asked her anything. It surely is an age of doubts and questionings. There are a great many things to be learned and children will find them out some way. If parents know and realize this time they can do anything with children then. The books that children read at that age should be books where they will not find anything that shocks them. Particularly parents should be careful not to tell the children not to read certain books and then leave the books about. The child's curiosity is so great that he will take the book and read, not to get the material out of the book, but just to find out why he was n't allowed to read. For of course if he can't read it, then there must be something awful in the book."

"During the adolescent age I think that parents should take particular pains to understand their children, and to try to live through the different stages characteristic of this age, along with the child. It is a very unsettled and trying period for either a boy or girl, more so than a great many mothers realize, for there comes into the child's life a deep longing for some intangible thing which he is continually groping for, and which seems impossible to find. It is something of the spirit which he is trying to satisfy, and therefore he often seeks it in music, nature, or religion. This is especially so with a girl, and a mother should not make fun of her daughter and think that she is being morbidly sentimental and silly, but she should be sympathetic and encourage her daughter to talk with her of her thoughts, so that she may wisely direct and guide them where she sees fit. Of course the child must not be aware of this guidance, for it might have the effect of causing the mother to lose her daughter's confidence entirely."

"I believe that children should be helped during the age of adolescence because it is a time when they feel, almost unconsciously, rebellious and fretful. They dislike being told to do things. In punishing for things that are done I think that one ought to be very careful at this age, for sometimes a child just can't help doing things and really they don't look to him nearly as unreasonable as they are. Instead of any corporal punishment I believe that a child should be carefully talked to and

told just what is taking place. Explain to girls why it is that they often feel like crying for no reason whatever. Explanation means everything at this time and in the end is far more beneficial, and you are rewarded for your trouble in telling them, whereas otherwise you would probably have a child on your hands whose confidence you could in no way gain. Confidence at this time means everything, and if it is not gained then, it never will be, for a child all too soon becomes extremely independent."

"I think it would be much better to satisfy children's curiosity about birth and their own experiences. A sufficient amount to satisfy their curiosity should be told them, and they would think far less about it than if they were left in the dark, groping about to discover for themselves. I think it a great mistake to always turn the conversation and do everything to switch the attention to something else when such things are brought up.

"I remember being over-self-conscious and depressed at times during this period and of absolutely hating to do little things, such as wear rubbers and go to bed. I think my mother helped me most in ignoring such traits when it had no direct bearing on my health, and of leading me out of myself when I became too depressed."

Most of the moods of the Listless Age are silly enough when we look back on them, yet emotion, even of a self-centred kind, may work through to great experience in

nature or in religious feeling. Adolescence is often driven into silent, deserted places. The woods, the stars, and the firelight may be closer confidants than any human being. Sunsets illumine a world that has seemed perverse and dreary. On moonlight nights sleep seems a scandalous waste. With this love of wide, open sky and starlight are often associated feelings of infinity. Hall gives a characteristic case of a girl who, at thirteen, began to realize eternity and think on the end of time, space, and the world. This sense of vast space made her serious-minded, she said, and conscious of her own weakness. Her heart beat faster with fear. And to help herself through these crises of feeling, she developed a kind of ritual drawn from hymns and the Bible.

It is not girls only, who, driven into the desert through loneliness, find their religious life. You would not suspect that banker of sentiment, yet one of the enduring memories of his youth was a passion to go out alone in a boat at night and, finding the central solitude of a pond, lie for hours looking up at the stars. He was utterly lonely and, like most of us, quite convinced that he was entirely exceptional and entirely misunderstood. Lying there alone, religious questions pressed upon him — morbidly, he now thinks. But chiefly his memory is of the surrounding vastness of sky and water that made him aware of God. "In the darkness infinity and I existed."

"The loud laugh," said Goldsmith, "speaks the vacant mind." Now the adolescent's mind is not vacant

in this sense. It is overfilled and oppressed, when it works at all. It never has extra space and energy. Naturally, therefore, it is not strong on humor. For humor implies self-possession and reserve strength — something to spare from the daily expenditures. It would be difficult to develop a sense of humor in owls. They seem to take themselves quite seriously. So do boys and girls in the adolescent period. Yet owl-eyed solemnity always provokes to laughter unless it provokes to wrath. One's own sad-eyed grief feels extraordinarily different from the foolish solemnity of any other soul. It is hard for most of us to be sufficiently inside the Paradoxical Age and sufficiently outside it to treat it in the best way. None the less, it has distinct sign-posts pointing toward the right treatment.

Long afterwards gratitude for this right handling may express itself as it does in these sentences written by a girl of nineteen:

"It was hard for me, when I was thirteen, to talk and meet strangers, whereas now I don't mind doing either. I think now, judging by what other girls have said, that my life was beautifully free from the loathsome whisperings of misguided childish minds. I never had the slightest idea of where one found babies until mother told me in a beautiful natural way. The minute I knew I had one consuming idea — to fit myself to be a perfect mother. I read the right books. After one or two experiences with cheap magazines and novels, I realized their sham and harmful atmosphere, the distorted, un-

real pictures of too horrible realities, and I discarded them. I have always loved kittens and little furry things, and when I was thirteen I began to look up the names of birds and try to find their nests and watch for the eggs and then the families. So that I might say my mind turned not to people, but to my mother, and my strongest thought was Myself, not through vanity, but through pride in my possibilities as a disciple and product of nature."

CHAPTER XIII

SOURCES OF HEALING

I HAVE now finished describing the symptoms of Adolescence and turn to consider further its treatment. I am guided by the belief that our best help is to strengthen what is already strongest and best in the child. For this end our first need is to see what interests are present in or even developed by Adolescence. The list is full of hope.

Adolescents commonly show increased interest in music or some other art, in the beauty of nature, in helpfulness toward children or older people, in impulses toward goodness and religion. Most of these great human interests have been quite dark to them through the Angular Age; now their lighted side has swung into vision. Because of the sudden love of music that may spring up at this time, it seems to me wise to keep up music lessons unless a child is intolerably bored, or supremely infertile along these lines. In one family I know the mother ruled that her children should keep up music until the age of fifteen, then choose whether to keep on or to drop it. Out of seven, five found in middle life exceptional pleasure in playing music, while two of the others enjoy it as an occasional pastime. Of 556 young men and women questioned by E. G. Lancaster, 464 reported an increased love of music from thirteen

to fifteen, though in many of these cases the interest died in later life.

I once found a girl of twelve, who had objected violently to music lessons, poring over a hymn tune which she was trying to pick out on the piano. "Are you doing that as part of your lesson or because you like it?" I asked. "I like it," she answered. "I like to play hymns when I feel blue, and I love to bang when I feel mad, but I hate discords." Surely the child was feeling out for the music that housed her lonely soul, Music is a world of many mansions; why, after all, should we try to make every child learn the whole subjunctive mood and the irregular verbs of music? It is better to free one's soul through "Dixie" or "Bethany" or "The Long Trail" than to be forever bored by Debussy or Bach. Open, then, the relief of music to every child who can enjoy it at this time. That it may have results beyond our imaginings the following words of an adolescent girl will show: "Music affected my conscience more than anything else in the world. Music just seemed to cleanse my soul and to start me fresh. When I would hear the Symphony Orchestra I'd go home and confess every little mean or unkind act I could remember because I had become ashamed of it."

Love of nature is, I believe, even more common than love of music at this age. Nature is a vague term enough, in this usage, but the highlights seem to include such heterogeneous objects as stars, clouds, mountains, moons, flowers, rivers, trees. Rarely is the nature-lover think-

ing of mudbanks, toads, skunks, and other gentle animals! And yet, though choose we must, such parts of the non-human as are loved are often loved with illuminating intensity.

Listen to Mary Antin as she reaches her fifteenth year: "I lay stretched out in the sun, my eyes levelled with the sea, till I seemed to be absorbed bodily by the very materials of the world around me; till I could not feel my hand as separate from the warm sand in which it was buried. Or I crouched on the beach at full moon, wondering, wondering, between the two splendors of the sky and the sea. Or I ran out to meet the incoming storm, my face full in the wind, my being a-tingle with an awesome delight to the tips of my fog-matted locks flying behind. . . .

"Thus courting the influence of the sea and sky and variable weather, I was bound to have dreams, hints, imaginings. It was no more than this, perhaps; that the world as I knew it was not large enough to contain all that I saw and felt; that the thoughts that flashed through my mind, not half understood, unrelated to my utterable thoughts, concerned something for which I had as yet no name. Every imaginative, growing child has these flashes of intuition, especially one that becomes intimate with some one aspect of nature." [1]

Best of all it is for children to find their spiritual enfranchisement in the nature beauty of their own familiar home surroundings. Of all the *outer* influences upon my

[1] Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*, p. 190.

childhood there is none I would less readily give up than that of the world that encircled our youth. It was a place of great trees a hundred years old; violets studded the wind-blown pasture; storms had shaped the gnarled oaks; the garden gate opened inward to a holy peace. In the years when my soul was most alone, most foolishly self-conscious, most veiled and blocked by reserve, I found in the pastures and under the stars, space that freed me from myself; companions that encircled my loneliness; peace to think, and a dawning, happy impulse to write.

I don't quite know where I could have turned but for this silent, outward world. People had eyes that stared into my soul; words that jarred and cut; but the outer world was gentle and attentive. It is surely not an uncommon experience that love of nature leads toward an understanding of one side of religion. Not, I think, as pantheism, — God in everything, — but rather as a setting spacious and beautiful enough to be the chamber through whose translucent walls we catch glories greater than any human beauty quite explains or justifies.

To some of us healing comes in this way without any special effort of teacher or parents. For others it must be sought like a sunny climate in this bleak period of childhood. Not all of them will tell us of any such need. But if we are intimate with them and if we know what to look for, we may anticipate the inarticulate. Despite the endless differences in children, it is part of my purpose of this book to assert that in their essential

needs they are much alike. Those essential needs are few, and recur again and again if we watch for them — affection, our confidence in them and theirs in us, beauty and the warmth of familiar home surroundings, the best conditions of health, a chance to be of real use, response and furtherance by us when they want to think and question — these are the remedies for what is curable in their troubles.

Love of nature is, like music, an outlet and inlet for heavy-laden youth whose burdens are wholly disproportioned to the facts. But better than peace from self is the finding of self in the interests of others. My own greatest joy, a kind of upborne comfort that found me weary and left me refreshed, was carrying from room to room my small brother, "Trois Étoiles." Evening by evening, as he waited fretfully for his supper, I carried him about the room and showed him pictured scenes of cows and clucking hens. His open-eyed absorption in outward things, horses and boats and choo-choo cars was so contagious that all my rainy grief fell away in his clear sunshine.

"My one resource out of loneliness and unhappiness," writes a friend of mine, "was adopting babies to love. I caught a little boy of four in the streets and begged him to come home to live with me. His cat came too. I told my mother that I ought to have him for mine because I loved him more than his own mother did. His own mother was glad to see him, though she did n't

seem to have missed him much." Though parents did not with eagerness give up their babies to my little friend, they did, more and more, give her a chance to take care of the babies. She spent her days in looking after children while their mothers were out. "And one little boy had a hernia," she tells me proudly, "and I had to change the bandages; but I learned to do it so well that they were satisfied."

It is oftenest, but not always, babyhood that holds the adolescent girl. I remember one who at twelve or thirteen opened a remarkable friendship with an old gentleman of eighty, childless and a widower. He was noted as rich, very kind, outgiving, lavishly generous in gifts to the girl friends of his nieces, one who always welcomed them with candy and jewels. But Millicent alone faced the need of helping him; not of receiving, but of giving. His loneliness touched her to a plan for making him happier. Every day in the winter she went before breakfast to see him. If ill herself, she coralled a younger sister into the service. Gradually the old man came to trust and depend on her. He brought out his wife's letters and talked of their past life together; he read Millicent her poems.

The tender appreciation of the girl expressed toward her special friend found other outlets. On a visit to an inn with a group of friends bent on gaiety, she noticed an old man, the proprietor, who was stone deaf. He sat alone in silence almost unnoticed. Early one morning Millicent got up and wrote a note of greeting to him.

Then she ran down-stairs and gave it to him. His face lighted and he smiled with happiness.

Because grown-ups are coming into the child's field of vision more and more from eleven or twelve onward, the right kind of teacher becomes of greater and greater importance. Who then is the right teacher? Sanford Bell[1] made an analysis of the answers of 453 men and 488 women as to what teachers had helped them most, at what time, and why. His conclusion is that fourteen in girls and sixteen in boys is the most usual age for help; that sympathy, encouragement, understanding, counsel, and the arousing of ideals and definite ambitions were what counted most to these boys and girls in their teachers. Hatred and scorn were expressed against the teachers for sarcasm, injustice, suspicion, severity, sternness, threats, not keeping promises, scolding, and failure to smile. Of this last crime I imagine many a teacher is unconscious, but children are more than aware of it. They are equally keen to scent out the cross or the silly teacher, and "smiling not enough or at the wrong time" are alike described as reprehensible.

Discouragement often comes to growing youths because they are treated without recognition of what is unobvious in them. They don't show their best or even what they most mean to show. *Obviously* they may be rude, fickle, selfish. But to respond only to what is obvious, is as stupid as to try to cure scarlet fever by

[1] Quoted by G. Stanley Hall in *Adolescence*, vol. II, p. 386.

putting ointment on the skin-rash which is sometimes the most obvious thing about it. In medicine, in business, in conversation we know well enough the stupidity of recognizing only what is obvious. Adolescents, too, need a diagnosis and treatment that goes below the surface.

I believe that boys and girls suffer at this time and later from not being treated with honor and confidence. It is easy to see bad points in any one. *Angle for the good points* even if they elude like a shy trout. The cultivation of these native and flowering interests is our best hope in the Paradoxical Age. The soil is often arid, often so rainsoaked, that only wild and native shoots can grow. Pent-up and therefore poisoning emotion is often there, self-centred and self-destructive, a toxin within the soul. Yet it is emotion, and all emotion rightly used is life and power. Along with the withdrawal from athletic competition that many girls go through, comes a chance for the development of artistic taste, folk-dancing, acting plays that may develop an insight into human nature. For girls drawing and cooking can be substituted for the strain of such severe studies as mathematics and Latin; for boys some summer months of *genuine* farm life may help.

I have seen a good many disastrous experiments on adolescents prefaced by a remark that I have come to regard as a danger signal: "But we *must* do something. We can't sit still and do nothing." Usually that is just what we must do so far as concerns the sort of uprooting

and drastic action that is contemplated when one issues such a preface. Patience and the ability to give only the unobvious remedies such as understanding and trust and unflinching affection — that is what most of our children need of us most of the time.

So we tide over the Adolescent Age. We should not change the school wherein a girl or boy is really rooted at this age. It is a bad time for transplantation unless they are unhappy. Too much is going on already, they are learning too much that is new in their own nature to be able safely or happily to meet new conditions.

We can list however a few definite palliatives. The first is innocent fun of a kind that is high-colored enough to catch and hold attention. We must take pains about this. Many "innocent" amusements are insipid and many attractive ones are pernicious. We must study the peculiar needs of the age. The little child needs no equipment; he moulds ships and lions out of the most unpromising material. But to the boy or girl of thirteen drama must be gaudy and blatant; he is more consciously hungry for romance than his little brother, but he can't make it. At the fag end of school is often a stretch of desert — a weariness of body and soul that has in itself no fertile life. Boys and girls at that age are surely going to theatres and moving-picture shows, and equally surely they need something of the kind. The mental appetite, like the physical, may be jaded. The only oasis they recognize, and barren

enough it may be, is an ice-cream soda, a dime novel, a bit of glittering jewelry, a moving-picture show.

In the North End of Boston three little Italian girls of thirteen and fourteen were reported by the school authorities as running wild. Their companions were demoralizing, and it looked risky. A school visitor was sent to their homes. She found one girl alone with no mother, a strict Italian father, and several younger children to care for. The father's efforts to keep the girl tethered had resulted in reckless running away. "You folks ought to look after us girls," said the Italian maiden; "we need to be helped."

It is not only girls in poor families who need to be helped. In a drug-store I once ran into a group of girls, aged fourteen, deeply immersed in ice-cream soda. They blushed — to a depth worthy of a darker deed. "Don't tell on us, please. It's against all the rules, and ma would jump on us if she knew we were here, but we just had to come!" Naturally I kept the secret. "But," thought I, "if children must have sprees, why not give them some that we approve or invent?" Surely we lack ingenuity. One father, I know, has a soda-making apparatus in his house and his boys make it for their friends. "They were sure to buy it, so I thought I'd see that it was good, and drunk at home."

Many a boy and still more girls will turn to reading in the languidness of the Listless Age. And they will dive into dark places to find the knowledge that something insistent in them demands. Ask the children's libra-

rians if you would be sure. But since knowledge is sure to be sought, leave the books you want read — clear and definite books, books written by lovers of Man and God — openly on the table and let them supplement your own explanations.

Supply romance and, even more, the romance of biography. Stanley Hall maintains that "boys in their teens have a veritable passion for the stories of great men." [1] If so, surely it is worth hunting to trap the best of these lives. The "Diary of Captain Robert Scott," explorer of the South Pole, contains not only the scientific discoveries of a remarkable man, but a picture of heroism, loyalty, and honor that stabs and spurs the heroism within any one of us. John Muir has written charmingly of his boyhood; the Wright brothers are heroes of the silent kind that Kipling loves; the "Wonder-Workers," by Mary H. Wade, gives notable stories of Luther Burbank and of Thomas Edison. For the girls there is Clara Barton's "Life," by her friend Percy Epler; the "History of the Red Cross," a mine of gold for him who can choose; Florence Nightingale's life and the "Story of Two Noble Lives," by Laura E. Richards.

Sometimes, as I have said, adolescence is mainly a time to be tided over; an out-of-door life, with air, sun, and sleep secure, is the foundation. But to my mind a far more healing balm is the assuring love of family and a small knot of friends. The world is quite ready to fall

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence*, vol. II, p. 155.

at the feet of babies, to hug, cajole and pat little beings who, like rabbits and kittens, are blissfully absorbed in the myriad claims of life. But those who need love most — the awkward, the fretful, the whining, the embarrassed — how few of us give them eager affection! Instinctively they annoy us, and we respond by treating them like dry twigs. Of course we cannot force affection and must not pretend to feel what we do not. But affection is n't a commodity whose limited supply we obediently read off as we do the amount of gasoline in the tank. We always have resources of it on which we have not drawn. It is like our awareness of the past, something that is increased by recollection, by quiet meditation, and by turning the concentrated rays of thought full upon him whom already we love. Thus light becomes heat. We forget, we get side-tracked. That is what is wrong with us. Understanding and recollection will reënforce affection.

The final word in the treatment of the Paradoxical Age is itself a paradox. Thou shalt love most that which seems most unlovable.

BOOK FIVE

THE AGE OF THE GANG

BOOK FIVE
THE AGE OF THE GANG

CHAPTER XIV
CHARACTERISTICS

GENERAL UTILITY CO.

All kinds of jobs at 25¢ an hour.
Small errands 5¢ apiece.

Electrical Contractors.

Let us install a telephone in your house from the house to the garage or from your room to the kitchen.

Boats to hire by the day or hour.
Kayacks made to order.
Sailing lessons 50¢ per lesson.
Parties taken sailing in the fast seaworthy Sloop Yacht Whippet. Price for whole party For morning or afternoon 50¢.
Give your maids an outing and let them enjoy the thrill of sailing in a fast seaworthy boat.

Able tutors furnished for backward children at 75¢ per hour.
Best references required and furnished.
We will provide instructors for rowing, swimming, tennis, bicycle riding, dancing, piano playing, in fact anything within reason.

Orders taken for fresh homemade candy and ice-cream.

If you have anything to be done consult us first.

We do it best and cheapest.

THE summer residents of a small New England town received in their mail one morning this alluring announcement. It met, as it deserved, an instant response. The General Utility Company (whose representatives appeared on demand as one humorous, embarrassed, but eloquent spokesman and one blushing but ready man-of-all-work) had in a few days more than it could do. Gradually it emerged before us in full feather. The General Utility Company was a gang, a competent, characteristically American gang in its best form.

The gang is at once the greatest help and the greatest danger of the ages between twelve and sixteen. At its best it crystallizes loyalty and precipitates idealism as nothing else can. At its worst it eats away individuality and leaves only the crushing control of a boss. But in any event the clan exists, and because it must be dealt with, must be understood. The gang age has able historians. If you would know it read J. Adams Puffer's "The Boy and His Gang," and Joseph Lee's chapters on "The Team and the Gang" in "Play and Education"; the "Boy Problem," by William B. Forbush, and "Boy Life and Self-Government," by George W. Fiske.

The occupations of the gang include such varied activities as team-play and tribal war; serving people as Scouts, or plaguing people as raiders; hanging around or running away. The fact that many of these activities are opposites shows that it is the gang, not what it does, that counts. Here is a description of a typical gang of the rougher sort:

"Twelve boys: four Irish, three French, two Poles, two Germans, one Jew. Ages between twelve and eighteen, but generally about fifteen. The boy who told me the story, one of the Frenchmen, said with much pride, 'We never got caught stealing.' I have since watched boys stealing from the big markets; they certainly have reduced it to a science!

"'Met on L. Street; all lived on that street. Would not let any gang on that street. Give a strange boy a licking. M. was ringleader — steals most; says, "Come on"; biggest and oldest. Did n't let anybody in after we started; been going together five years. M. started it, and asked us to be in the gang We played run-sheep-run, tag, relievo, hide and seek. Stay out all night; have a fire down by the foundry. Go to shows Monday and Saturday nights; like Railroad Jack, Great White Diamond, White Eagle; like plays where there was fighting. Jumped freights to S—— and P——. Ran away from home to U——; stayed up there two weeks. Hated to go to school; ran away because I did n't like to study. Saw boys out, so I liked to stay out and play baseball. Go to W—— Market in a crowd; steal apples, candy, grapes, and peanuts; we never got caught. Put wires across the sidewalks. Fight with another gang; fought for the fun of it, to see which was the strongest; fought with clubs. If there was a dispute in our crowd, leader settled it. If two fellows were fighting for a thing, the leader took it away from them and gave it to another fellow. If a member of the gang lied to one of us fellows,

we called him a squealer; if he told on us, we called him a spy. Get our money from junk. Drink beer. All smoke. We had our best times bunking out, ringing doorbells, and tying cats' tails together. We like to plague girls — ask them for a kiss, and things like that.'"[1]

What is the period of the gang? The most thorough writers on this period agree rather surprisingly as to the date of its appearance and the period of its maturity. Henry D. Sheldon, who studies both beginning and ending, finds the term starts occasionally as early as ten and end as late as seventeen, reaching its height about fourteen; Joseph Lee refers to the gang as prevalent from twelve to sixteen. J. Adams Puffer, from a study of sixty-six gangs, says that they last normally from ten to sixteen. "Boyhood," as Puffer graphically puts it, "begins with the second set of teeth; it ends with the advent of the beard." "Boys drop out of the gang suddenly so that very few remain after sixteen years of age. At this time boys are entering the second adolescent period and become intensely interested in girls. They feel so far above boys twelve or thirteen years old that they no longer care to affiliate with them."[2]

It is a significant fact that the best writers on this period deal almost wholly with boys. The books just referred to are all but one written by men who eat,

[1] J. Adams Puffer, *The Boy and His Gang*, p. 18. Houghton Mifflin Company.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 5 and 36.

drink, and breathe boy-atmosphere. Several of them write with well-controlled scorn of the ways of women toward boys, and of girls toward each other at this period. Sheldon, whose study of 1034 cases includes both boys and girls, finds that "girls are more nearly governed by adult motives than boys. They organize to promote sociability, to advance their interests, to improve themselves and others. Boys are nearer to primitive man; they associate to hunt, fish, roam, and fight, and to contest physical superiority with each other." From the boy's point of view the period is one of entire scorn for girls, at least in expression. "Profoundly interested in youth of his own sex . . . he cares less than nothing for youth of the other." So also says Puffer; so say the boys; but beware of *camouflage*. Joseph Lee states the same fact more accurately. "The gentle passion itself finds gang expression chiefly in the guise of sex antagonism." [1] And as for girls, outwardly they reciprocate the indifference; but inwardly — do you really believe it?

Clubs are naturally the central attraction of life to the gang. In fact, they *are* the gang given a habitation, a name, and a comfortable working membership. At the gang age a boy not only wants one companion; he prefers from eight to a baker's dozen. Then he feels, as every one wants to feel, surrounded, sustained, expressed. Youth is not lonely any longer! It has a group-

[1] Joseph Lee, *Play and Education*, p. 319.

soul. "Come on, you guys!" is the love-song of the gang. It calls and they come, like crows in autumn, with no more aim than to sit in a pine-tree, caw and be happy. Why boys and girls like to form clubs is almost as unanswerable a question as why they want to marry. They do. Human nature, and perhaps the nature of its four-footed ancestors, makes the choice of gangs almost inevitable to boys. They know that it is not good for man to be alone. They know that they are not themselves if they are only themselves. You've seen the scattered silvery globes of mercury from a broken thermometer run to each other as soon as they are within touching distance. So do our children at this gang age. The instinct to form gangs, like the instinct to marry, is below consciousness. It is fixed deep in the instinct of the race; it is a part of gregariousness. McDougall analyzes in an interesting way the crowd instinct that brings tens of thousands to a football or cricket game. It is the crowd rather than the game that attracts the crowd. Ten thousand men and women would not stand alone to watch any game. To feel together, to shout together, or triumph together is in itself a joy. So the gang rather than its occupation allures the gang.[1]

When we analyze further the special form of gregariousness which arises at the gang age we find that the gang enables boys and girls to do things that they want to do and which cannot be done alone. Does the desire for games develop the gang or the gang the games?

[1] William McDougall, *Social Psychology*, p. 89. Luce & Co.

It is hard to say which is cart and which is horse in this case, but it is certain that coöperative games can only be played with a gang and that children at this age want to play coöperative games. So clubs are formed by both sexes; boys tend to athletic clubs as instinctively as blackberries grow on a vine, while girls, it has been proved by many examples, are more devoted to clubs for clubs' sake. According to Sheldon's study of 1034 cases, girls initiate five times as many secret societies as do boys, five times as many purely social clubs, three times as many industrial or literary societies, and twice as many philanthropic clubs. They even indulge in clubs for self-improvement, a dangerous occupation that most boys shrink from as from infection. Notice also that boys form seven times as many clubs for athletics as do girls. Physical activity was the feature in ten per cent of girls' and seventy-seven per cent of boys' societies. Sheldon's conclusion is that physical activity *must* be made the basis of social work for boys, and that boys and girls, because they are not yet interested in the same things or in one another, must be organized in separate groups.[1] As girls' gangs have been far less thoroughly studied than those of boys I will give some descriptions by girls of their gangs, which tend to confirm Sheldon's conclusions:

"I belonged to a club of twenty girls originated at the beginning of my high-school course. It was formed primarily, I think, for the sake of 'having a club,' and

[1] H. D. Sheldon, quoted by Forbush, *The Boy Problem*, p. 44.

certainly fulfilled its mission as such, being carried to an extreme in its social festivities and its clique character. We used to have long walks and this made much of the outdoor side of our play, as well as attending every stock company and party together in a body. Later I believe we did organize a more or less philanthropic side to the club, but its influence certainly was not greatest in the club activities. I do not think as a whole that the club did much harm, in spite of its exclusive tendencies, and it certainly furnished ample opportunity for a crowd of girls who loved fun to get down to business seriously and organize. Many and hot were the discussions and letters on points of the club government. The club has lasted, being handed on to a new set of girls initiated recently, and, I believe, still continues its original purpose, with perhaps a more definite idea of social service in its various activities."

"All the girls that lived in our neighborhood were about the same age and so the different periods of our lives occurred at nearly the same time. We all became very much interested in dramatics and for this reason we started a club the members of which should give a play out of doors once a year. At first there were only six of us who had the honor of being members. But gradually as we wrote our play we decided that to make it a success we must have a few more members. We had secret meetings which were very crude; order was an unknown virtue, and we usually adjourned knowing less about

the plans than when we came to the meeting. Before the cast of characters had been finally decided upon we came to the conclusion that we must have boys for heroes. By the time we were ready to ask them to join the club, they were so curious to find out what we girls were doing, they accepted before they knew what was expected of them. Then began the great difficulty of trying to make them come to rehearsals. After weeks of hard practising and innumerable fights, we gave our first play, 'Violet's Search for Peter Root.' The next spring we gave another play, *but the boys were clever enough to resign from the club before we began our work.* That fall I went away to school, and as yet I have never really understood just what did happen, but I know a misunderstanding occurred between two or three of the girls. Thereupon the club was abolished."

Let us not imagine that all girls' clubs are æsthetic. I know of one entitled "Raise the Devil Club," the principal article of whose constitution was that you should always do something more hair-raising the next week than you had done the week before. This was a practical club; the evil deeds of the one described below are more purely imaginative:

"One summer when we were at our country place a group of us, both boys and girls, organized a secret society. It is very hazy in my mind now exactly what we did and what the object of it was. I do remember, though, that we were a bloodthirsty band of pirates.

We found a big cave on the shore and we met there almost every day. We kept our swords and our brilliant red sashes and red handkerchiefs for our heads hidden and only donned them when we arrived at the spot. I suppose we must have imagined ourselves as being fearsome sights; we probably looked extremely funny, however. The thing we did was to hunt for buried treasure. We had heard a rumor that there was such a thing somewhere on the shore, so we started in searching. When we met at the cave we dressed up in our piraty-looking costumes and then sallied forth in groups, waving swords and growling in low tones to one another. It is probably needless to say that we never found the buried treasure, but I do know that we spent a very delightful summer and that being a pirate is a never-failing source of amusement."

The last club I shall describe is typically a club formed for mystery and nothing else, and like many a secret thing it came to a sad end.

"A Secret Club. — My first secret club was formed during my seventh year in grade school. There were ten of us girls in the neighborhood, the very best of friends, that started the club. We were just at the age when mystery was the most exciting thing in life. So we decided that our club name and meetings should be very secret. When we took in a new member there were a great many ridiculous vows she had to take: such as never speaking to a boy, or having a thing to do with

any one outside the club. We also had a very severe initiation. One of the girls had an older brother that helped us plan our initiations. However, in one of our initiations we made one of the girls desperately ill, so our mothers investigated and found our club entirely too rough for nice little girls and we were forced to disband."

CHAPTER XV

THE BENEFICENT GANG

ARE gangs worth while? As we meet it casually in examples like those given above, the gang does not seem of great value or significance. Indeed, it is common to hear folks decry it: "It's too bad! Mary (or more likely Harry) is as good as gold when she (or more likely he) is alone, but when she goes with the other girls there's no managing her." Perfectly true. But is not our fallacy the old one that goodness is mainly keeping quiet and badness making a racket? A boy can't long take satisfaction in being as good as gold. That seems to him miserly. His gold must be spent; his life must be active or it becomes morbid. Here is the primary value of the gang at this period. It comes like Don Quixote to extricate forlorn knights and damsels from the spell of self-centredness. Fortunately for all concerned, boys and girls are never so far gone in melancholy that they cannot be rescued with surprising speed. The quick resilience of youth that is one of its shining beauties is never more gaily shown than in the recovery from morbidness. Like airplanes above the battle-line, gangs are always circling about the field of youth, ready to lift despondency from burdened shoulders.

Girls tend to be more moody than boys and have, on the whole, less strong and concentrated loyalty at this

age. Therefore it often seems to me that girls need the clan spirit more, even, than boys do. The finer clubs like the Girl Scouts develop in girls this spirit of loyalty to a group and a cause, which arises more instinctively in boys. A boys' club quivers with intense allegiance as a bulldog quivers from the tip of his snout to the end of his snipped tail, in the joy of anticipated combat. That's the way to live! It is through all-absorbing fealty that great deeds of heroism or of science are attained. Joan of Arc and Pasteur are at once wholly lost and wholly found in their task. Self-consciousness and its attendant sins are driven out. Fear vanishes! The heights are stormed! For this reason the coming of the clan spirit during Adolescence is for girls and boys not only new life, but resurrection from the pangs of morbidness.

It is, indeed, because of this circling nearness of the gang that the loneliness of the Paradoxical Age is rarely its whole story. Indeed, as I have said, many accounts of boyhood accent the activities of the gang so exclusively that they ignore the solitariness of these troublous years. To my thinking this is a mistaken psychology. Loneliness and listlessness are present in the majority of boys and in almost all girls. But there are hours, days, and months when comradeship bubbles up, washing away loneliness, and finally, by fourteen or fifteen, conquering it. Strong emotions remain, but they are the sunlit emotions of romance rather than the drizzling emotions of self-pity.

Puberty strikes girls harder than it does boys. The

gang spirit strikes boys harder than it does girls; yet I doubt whether any boy finds greater support, bliss, and peace in belonging to a gang than do shy and lonely girls. To be embedded in and supported by a group who accepted me was the bridge without which I could hardly have crossed the self-conscious years of youth. Extraordinary safety there is in being accepted as one of the gang. A lad, afterwards exceptionally popular, told me that his loneliness and self-distrust at this time was a memory of horror. "Boys are just as shy as girls," he confided. "I remember once a fellow said, 'I don't care to go to walk with you,' and I thought about it for months." "How did you get over being shy?" I asked. "Well, I got in with a gang who thought I was all right. They did n't think I was a peach, you know," he added modestly, "but just all right." The need of this assurance of being not indeed "a peach, but just all right," makes some sort of a clan essential, I believe, to every boy and girl between eleven and sixteen. Every one knows how much easier it is to sing with an accompaniment. Some of us remember that our knees were less annoyingly tremulous when we made our maiden speeches from behind the protection even of a table. How much more is self-consciousness shut away and self let out when one's protector is a group, for the group, like the table before the speaker or the breeze in the Star-Spangled Banner, half conceals, half discloses. We speak more confidently from behind the buttress of our other selves. Our voice and our action are

more our own because we are encompassed about. The naked soul is not normal. As one girl expresses her problem, "The trouble with me is that I am self-centred, but I truly don't want to be a pig." We need the group to make us ourselves, by taking us out of ourselves.

If this statement is true it involves action on the part of parents whose children are solitary. Every such child must be helped to find the group that will allow growth under the shelter of comradeship. The need of this may indicate boarding-school. On the other hand, it may emphatically point away from boarding-school. The agony of the first days at boarding school is often the sense of a dangerous isolation like that of being dropped in a desert inhabited only by wild beasts and unprotected by the perfect assurance of family and friends. The decision for or against boarding-school is naturally an individual one, but is made on these general lines. Is the child so sensitive that so sharp a change will make an indelible impression of loneliness? In this case try partial or shorter absence from home, as in a summer camp or a few weeks' outing with a group of friends. Is there a boarding-school with exactly the right conditions of friendly supervision? Is there one where special talents or interests can help him to taste success among his pals? Does the school give freedom from what has especially held him back from sociability hitherto?

"Throw a boy into the water and he will learn to

swim," we are told. Some boys, yes; others will drown. A sensitive child sent to boarding-school may suffer, as did Shelley and Francis Thompson, tortures whose scars last and burn unhealed through life. Francis Thompson, writing of Shelley's boyhood, revives his own still stinging and smarting in acid remembrance. Teasing and hazing, the petty malignant annoyance recurring hour after hour, day by day, month by month, became by its accumulation an agony. "This is the most terrible weapon that boys have against their fellow boy, who is powerless to shun it, because, unlike the man, he has virtually no privacy. His is the torture which the ancients used, when they anointed their victim with honey and exposed him naked to the restless fever of the flies. He is a little St. Sebastian, sinking under the incessant flight of shafts which skilfully avoid the vital parts. . . . If a boy were let into Heaven, he would chase the little angels to pluck the feathers out of their wings." [1]

Perhaps a gang as idyllic as Stevenson's Lantern-Bearers could have lighted the path for Shelley or Thompson. But many a boy or girl who will not fit without pain or squeezing into a rough-and-ready gang, may at the right time be transplanted and finally take root. Let me give an example of a girl's successful transplantation. I see her still as she was before she found her group. She would drag along almost ten feet behind the crowd or march home alone — a little offish, a little pert, a great deal uncomfortable and lonely. She meant

[1] Everard Meynell, *Life of Francis Thompson*, pp. 15–20.

to make friends, but her intentions were of no use to her. She could not grow friends on that shallow soil any more than a rose can grow buds in the sand. At thirteen her older brother, who since his father's death was already lifting the family problem, came to consult me about the girl, who was felt by all around her and by herself to be a failure. I suggested fresh fields and pastures new, the outdoor life of a California camp far away from past failure. A month later the girl wrote home: "Camp is wonderful. There are three of us who call ourselves the triumvirate. We do everything together and share everything. I've joined the gang and I've been put through all the stunts. First they tease you pretty hard, and they dare you to jump from the float straight into the water with your hands round one knee. But as soon as you get through with that, they take you into the gang all right. They don't ever speak against you again. It's awfully nice of them. Yesterday I had great luck in basket-ball. I have been made captain of my team and this morning the girls cheered and sang for me. I've never been so happy in my life." Hurrah for the triumvirate!

Here is a testimony from another girl, who, though in advance she hated the idea of boarding-school, found in it her salvation: "I was rather a lonely child, and I met my small problems unaided, for the most part. One period of some importance was when I realized that my mother was not infallible, and that it was possible to differ from her in opinion without being convicted

of sin. It was a shock at first and I thought I was a very wicked girl; later I came to realize that two people might amiably agree to differ, without mutual loss of respect. Another event which looms large in retrospect was being sent to boarding-school at the age of about fifteen, to shake me out of my little rut and cure me of shyness. I suffered agonies in anticipation, went for a year and had a most glorious time. Whether it had the desired effect or not, I don't know, but I made some life-long friends, came near being expelled once, and managed to extract a huge amount of enjoyment out of it."

There are, I doubt not, exceptions to the beneficent effects of luring boys and girls into even the best-made gangs. A boy like Francis Thompson, sensitive, unathletic, dreaming dreams beyond his age, may be forever incapable of joining a gang. He may only be driven by the gangs about him into the deep and painful solitude of a crowd. It is useless to gang the ungangable boy or girl, and there are in every large group children who silently endure the gang without getting anything out of it. Here is the calmly humorous estimate of a distinguished sufferer, Professor Josiah Royce, as he looked back from the age of sixty to the age of eleven: "My comrades very generally found me disagreeably striking in my appearance, by reason of the fact that I was red-headed, freckled, countrified, quaint, and unable to play boys' games. The boys in question gave me my first introduction to the majesty of the community. The introduction was impressively disciplinary and persistent.

On the whole it seemed to me not joyous, but grievous. In the end it probably proved for my good." [1] Yet we find that this shy boy made even during this period of torture a few lasting friends. That is the best hope for the boy or girl who will have none of the gang. And if to a few friends can be added a pinch or two of genuine success in any field whatsoever, the battle against dreariness is won.

Any lonely, self-distrustful and solitary child needs two achievements, to be somewhere and somehow definitely successful, and to be loved and appreciated by somebody. If we put on magnifying glasses we can find even in great failures a tiny cranny of success. Widen the fissure, then, as ferns and mosses know how to do, not with a mallet but with new growth. Discover if possible a talent for part-singing, skill in tennis, ability in cooking, interest in carpentry or electricity, cleverness in charades. If any one of these gifts can be put where it is needed and appreciated, we may have opened the crack of sociability and split away solitude. Social success, even in a minute affair, may widen the crevice and let happiness emerge. For in early youth happiness and despair are both near the surface and apparent offishness is a common sign of hunger for companionship.

I have dwelt long on the power of the gang to defeat loneliness and to kill self-centredness. Another virtue

[1] *Papers in Honor of Josiah Royce*, p. 281.

of the gang is its power, when rightly used, to rouse and sustain such moral heat that faults melt like rubbish in its glow. Goodness — that is the doing of things in right not wrong ways — springs up normally with some one else or for some one else; best of all for a common, uniting cause. Nor is it good to be coldly good. Hot, spirited goodness is what counts — goodness with such accumulated spurt that it leaps ahead like a thoroughbred horse, after the whip of occasion has dropped. Goodness that becomes not a habit, but a taste. A current even of that exotic virtue, courtesy, if started by the leader of a group may carry along all the members, just as in war a current of death-defying courage sweeps an entire regiment past fear.

That the club spirit can be immensely valuable, no one who has followed the most successful gang of gangs can doubt. It took the instinct of a genius in the realm of boyhood to start the Boy Scout movement. It succeeded largely because it hits the bull's-eye of boy desire, — comradeship in service. The rest of us tried to develop boys and girls, too, for that matter, by plenty of difficulties that they disliked — arithmetic, dishwashing, clean hands, and abstention from noise. But it took General Baden-Powell to give boys difficulties in what they understood and thirsted for so eagerly that cleanliness, drudgery, discipline, self-control were eagerly swallowed in the same quick draught. The World War has beaten into ears that would not hear a truth to which every boy's instinct responds. It is not

only more blessed but it tastes better, infinitely better, to give than to receive service, provided that the service is genuine. Every boy who gets busy in a movement greater than himself reëchoes this law. The gang anticipates coming life as a quick fertilizer hurries the slow-growing corn. In Boy Scouts courtesy, which at first is an awkward imitation, becomes rooted, innate, standard. The great English public schools turn out almost a race of gentlemen, men in whom courtesy and chivalry, fortitude, honor, self-control are inbred and ineradicable. They have known at Eton, or Rugby, what these things mean. They have imitated the public school standard, at first shyly and externally, then through all the rest of their lives, still shyly but instinctively.

A deeper, though less easily analyzable, spirit grows with the development of the group. The spirit of membership may become the greatest single religious experience of man. To be united for any stirring cause is to feel one's self not artificially soldered to the group, but a branch of it — growing with its growth. And to know yourself as a twig on the branch is to feel the vine, the roots that are yours, yet greater than yours. I know no better analysis of the value of this spirit of membership as felt by the gang than is given in Joseph Lee's "Play and Education." He portrays membership not as the act of helping one another; but as working through a common soul; not as losing one's self, but as finding

the team; not of shrinking because one is only one among many, but of enlarging because one belongs.[1]

That is why in membership we experience a spiritual law. When we belong to a family, a profession, a nation, our power is increased tenfold. We are not only more powerful in outward action, because people accept us as representative, but we are clearer, firmer within because we know ourselves as actually part of what is greater than ourselves. Christ said that where two or three are gathered together in His name He is in the midst of them. It is not irreverent, indeed I believe it is of the essence of Christ's meaning, to say that a gang of the right kind can do miraculous deeds. And not always, by any means, when they are together; often when they are alone but still representative. A Boy Scout captured by the Germans in France was asked to reveal the whereabouts of the French Army. He steadily refused to tell. Threatened with death, he did not falter. At last (as the German officer wrote to his wife), "We had to shoot the little fool. It was a pity, but it was his fault for being so obstinate." A Scout's honor is to be trusted. He could not yield. So, smiling, he laid down his life.

Membership, and with it, even in solitude, a vicarious power, a dignity and influence more than one's own — these are the great gifts of the clan. Who are you? asks the world. I am an American; I am a Red Cross nurse; I am a Boy Scout. At once I become representative.

[1] Joseph Lee, *Play in Education*, p. 335. Macmillan Company.

"Vive l'Amérique," shouted the French peasants when during the World War they saw even a single doughboy. So, because she represents her group, the Red Cross nurse passes unafraid through the roughest crowds, the Boy Scout rises to deeds that he would have thought impossible alone.

This spirit of membership is often said to be uncommon or even absent in girls. I doubt if it is ever wholly absent. It has sprung up to my knowledge in a country school, in a city club, in the Girl Scouts, and even in a reformatory for women. If it were absent it should all the more be telegraphed for, cabled for, grafted on to that native quality which is nearest to membership. For the power to be somehow and somewhere a member is no superfluous, no external trait. It is the sap by which life ascends. Every girl must possess or acquire it. It is more indispensable than speech, for it is communication. It may be that girls' loyalty runs instinctively to small and intimate groups, to family and to friendship. But any loyalty that finds its spiritual meaning becomes a group loyalty. Loyalty to home is capable of becoming loyalty to all homes. I have known a woman lifted wholly out of the narrowness of a small set by a vision of her city's needs. "Women," she would express it, "are home-makers; no home-maker can be wholly happy while other homes are cheerless. Hence we women want to make all the city homelike, clean, well-housed, speaking a common tongue, united, happy." So she became a leader in civic work. There her home loyalty is

expressed. Through that loyalty all the women in the city — you see as her face lights at the sight of them — have become members of her family.

Many American girls learned first under the stress of the World War that they are members one of another. They quite literally learned to give up anything from candy to leisure and safety, because the community need came first. Any tenacious membership gives, in its own sphere, the startling and normal experience that we want what the whole gang wants. "We" has but one more letter than "I," but it is the difference between earth and heaven. In marriage, family life, the clan, the orchestra, the team game, the committee, the firm, I pass from *I* to *we*. Suddenly the "*Thou shalt nots*" of the Old Testament are changed to a firmer, sterner, and happier phrase, "*We do not.*" In learning membership and the spirit of team-play, girls will learn, as boys have, that to suffer if need be for a group or a cause is what they truly want. They will learn it before they are women, and so will be more ready for the self-forgetting sacrifice of marriage and childbirth, the intimate and holy sacrifice that fulfils their own will.

CHAPTER XVI

DISEASES AND THEIR TREATMENT

So far I have dwelt on the valuable aspects of the gang as a cure for self-centredness, a stimulus to the conquest of faults, an initiation into larger memberships. But the gang often takes directions other than these. We need to consider the dangers of the gang and their treatment. The group, the club, the gang may plumb its own depth. But if, as often happens with boys, it goes astray or, if — the bane of girls' gangs — it grows shallow, then father, mother, friends, or leaders are responsible for calling it back to itself or, if necessary, breaking it up.

Easier said than done! Surely, what is n't! If it is to be done at all, good diagnosis must be the first step. All plant diseases are not killed by the same spray. All gangs are not reformed by the same means. To help the gang we must know not only its value, but its weakness. What are the diseases of the gang? A common gang-disease is the illusion that all outsiders are unreal and therefore contemptible. Plaguing people, Puffer says, was a common occupation in forty-four of sixty-six clubs studied. This sounds brutal, but it is chiefly boy in action. A snowball is peaceful and dead; a snowball plus a boy is alive and cutting. To translate this illustration into general terms: Anything thoroughly alive is also dangerous to something and in danger from some-

thing. This axiom naturally holds true of the gang. Nothing so aggressive, boisterous, and expeditious could be without risk to the passer-by. A Chinaman or a fussy old maid may not be able to get by at all, without a hold-up.

"Gee," exclaimed a small boy of my acquaintance, "but we teased Bob to the limit this afternoon. You bet we raised Cain!" "What a pity," said I; "there are too many Cains in the world already, you don't want to raise another!" "Well, Bob was such an old flubdub," he replied, conclusively, "and then Harry was away at high school, so there was n't a darned thing to do."

Railroad crossing! Look out for the engine! Dangerous are engines under full steam or off their track. Yet we don't prefer an engine that won't go. We must grasp this clue firmly many a time when to be provoking seems synonymous with being boy. "Provoke not one another to wrath," commands the Apostle. "Provoke every one within sight to wrath, especially foreigners, cops, and old maids," commands the gang, and most boys (at least) do not hesitate to obey. The fine art of plaguing people includes, according to Puffer, rapping on doors, tipping over the pushcarts of Jews, breaking windows and electric lights, ringing doorbells, tripping people up by tying a rope across the street, hitting any one accessible with a potato or a cabbage, collecting dead rats to throw at Chinamen.[1] The boys cited by Puffer were all city-bred, yet they were not untypical.

[1] J. Adams Puffer: *The Boy and His Gang*, pp. 40, 45.

I recall a group of charming young gentlemen, descendants of the Puritans, who made raids on private houses in their neighborhood every August, whenever the owners were away for a night or two and the maids could be terrified. The raiders broke windows, painted white scrawls over the hardwood doors, stole food, and upset the furniture generally. The raids lasted about four summers and then suddenly ceased. It was not that the parents protested. Their houses were unscathed. They did nothing but laugh. It was simply that the boys outgrew this kind of sport.

What motives are included in these gay pastimes? Surely, the love of adventure, joined to the desire to create perturbation. The apple orchard with a sign, "All boys are cordially urged to pick and eat as many apples as possible," would be far less alluring than that headed, "Trespassing strictly forbidden." The policeman who will arrest you if he can is part of the fun, and when he is Irish he actually knows it. The rasping old maid or the bewildered Chinaman have the charm of a Polish hen or a goggle-eyed toad. These are aliens existing mainly to be teased. There is almost never an individual hatred in these attacks. The enemy is distinguished much more by garb or race than by his special characteristics. One thing is certain and consoling. The desire to annoy people is not going to last as an integral part of manhood. There will be but a trace of it left in the masculine desire to tease cats!

Not only plaguing and raids but fighting has certainly

to be reckoned as a part of boy life in this age. Boys fight gang against gang, but I have never heard of a prolonged and organized fist-fight between girls. When girls scuffle it is either for possession of a coveted object or in bitterness of soul. "But girls do sometimes fight with boys," my ten-year-old tells me. "Really! When?" "Why, when a big boy hangs on by your hair and you can't hang on by his!"

Another lure to the gang is the siren of secrecy. Secret societies of objectionable types are real dangers at this period. Some day there will be a whole book written about the fascination of secrecy. It is not a simple phenomenon, neither can you crush it with one foot. Like the sensitive plant it breaks or shrivels at one point only to begin growing farther down. A secret society has the charm and danger of what it excludes. Inclusion is often reduced to a fantastic minimum. Some children's secret societies are entirely devoid of any interest except the thrilling one of mysterious letters known only to the initiated, and the still intenser thrill of keeping the secret from others. The charm of exclusion is in many clubs even greater than the charm within. A secret society to which the one hundred million people of the United States belonged would soon lose both its fascination and its secrecy. College clubs to which any one can belong are not popular.

Why is it that the sense that some one else is left out adds to our joy within? I suppose the longing of the out-

sider creates a demand, and when supply is less than demand, value begins. The knocking of an outsider at the barred door becomes an assurance of the charm of the inn. Exclusiveness is essential to secrecy and to excitement; but it has a bad influence on democracy. The excluder is a superior being, the excluded is an obsequious or an embittered one. Have you ever watched a timid outsider, half a head shorter and without a password that admits to the gun-pointing fortress of a secret club? I have seen her lingering on the edge, dropping a bit behind a group whose arms were all intricately entwined, while hers were hanging by her side. Poor child! exclusion is far from humorous to the outsider. Of course the insiders know this as the following paper shows:

"I am a member of a sorority, and I am perfectly willing to admit that the amount of good done in an ordinary high school by secret societies is quite submerged by the great amount of harm. But doing away with secret societies by no means settles the question, because girls are naturally cliquey and they would only transfer interest to clubs. Where the secret societies have been abolished, I know that the tension made by the clubs is just as keen. For myself I can see no way out, but nevertheless I think something should be done in a great many cases because it certainly 'blights' the school life of the girls who are left out and take it seriously."

However annoying, however "socially intolerable" the tendency of the gang to plague people may be, and

however hard on outsiders its exclusiveness, these traits often leave no serious marks on the gang itself. The gang begins to degenerate largely through three causes, a strong misleader, a weak undoer, or a softening of outgrown gang structure. The instinctively chosen leader is he who is the most athletic, the best mixer, or who has some special talent or advantage, like money, and uses it freely with the crowd. Girl leaders, too, tend to have the same qualities, to be athletic, social, and lavish, though personal charm often plays a larger part than in boys' gangs.

The answers to Puffer's questionnaire show the type of boy leader who may become a misleader. "T. was leader. Steals most. Says, 'Come on.'" "D. was the leader. He could fight best and had the most money." "G. was leader. *He gave you anything if he had it.* Worst one in the gang." [1]

The weak leader lets the reins slip. "We descend to meet" is the much-quoted remark of Emerson. Yet it is but half true. We descend or we rise according to the control of a master-mind or the slackness of a degenerate one. The boy leader, weak and popular, who calls out, on a hard hike, "I say, fellows, let's quit," pulls down the gang. So does a drifting leader who uses his money or influence to draw the crowd into gambling or low movies.

Naturally the standards of the clan leader when they are low tend to pull down the weaker members. I recall

[1] J. Adams Puffer, *The Boy and His Gang*, p. 24.

a group of five boys and five girls, quite unchaperoned, frolicking one wintry Sunday afternoon in that dangerous part of the city belonging to millionaires. The girls came back to supper flushed and excited. "Oh, yes, they'd had a wonderful time." But as "wonderful" is the only adjective known to youth, I wondered, too. At bedtime my special child, Helen, murmured that it was awfully hard to keep up your standards when the girls all smoked cigarettes and rough-housed with the boys, sprawling all over the floor. She had been shocked and, in spite of hating to be called a prig, she had refused rough-housing and cigarettes. Ellen and Juliet, her special friends, had gone the whole length, but Juliet was much nicer than Ellen, the girl confided, for Juliet was really ashamed and sorry afterwards. Besides, Juliet went into it for the sport, while Ellen only did everything that the others did without enjoying it. I told Helen that I thought the boys whom she wanted to know and who were most worth knowing, would like her better and respect her more if she stuck to her principles. She agreed. "The two boys who did n't smoke looked really shocked to see the girls do it."

Wrong-doing always consists in slipping down from the right hill or scrambling up the wrong. The weak leader slips and pulls the crowd downhill; the corrupt leader with his megaphone voice shouts base ideals so loud that the group cannot hear the voice that Socrates heard like a flute in his ears, forbidding disloyalty. Yet the loudest voice is not the longest heard. There is

another voice that is still speaking when any one sins. During the world food shortage of 1917 some college girls, society girls, and girl prisoners were all working in the fields within the prison grounds. Some one suggested that they should work together. "Ah!" exclaimed the superintendent of a woman's prison, "there is nothing, nothing in the universe that would help my women as much as to be with girls whose standards are higher than theirs. It is what they long for and what they need. Many of them have known nothing better than their own gang."

All I have brought out so far points to the conclusion that to improve a gang one must make sure that it has the right leader. The callousness that ends in plaguing people is due to lack of imagination. Cure it by increasing the imagination of the leader. A crowd is far more callous than any individual in it and will take the group standard as a cover for brutality. Therefore the leader is the fellow to tackle. He can shuffle off the teasing instinct of his group as easily as he shuffles it on.

Change the leader of the gang or the membership of the gang or the responsibility of the gang, and you may supply irresistible and unexpected temptations to goodness. City life, nothing to do, a school one scorns, furtive meetings with boys and over-frequent hours at movies, and the crowd degenerates. I have known outdoor life, the right leader, and the spirit of responsibility to change the whole quality of a girls' gang which

had been the despair of parents. "Mother," said one of the members after six weeks of camp life in which she had begun to feel new roots grow, "Mother, I want to be the kind of girl you are trying to make me, but don't overdo it!" She was right. There is no such thing as being raced beyond one's speed into goodness, but the right leader can increase the pace in an amazing way.

How find and install him? Here are some suggestions. Don't condemn the wrong leader, but show him in his true colors by contrast with a leader of more fire and less soot. Bring the misleader himself up to his own best. It is more than probable that he is himself chafing over his own misleadership and wants something better to do. "There are many potential kings of boyhood in any neighborhood and several potential personalities in each of them," writes Joseph Lee. The advances made through responsibility are shown convincingly by the studies of boys in the George Junior Republic at Freeville and by some of Judge Lindsey's boys on probation from the Juvenile Court in Denver.

Finally and after all is said, gain just in age alone is a far wiser teacher than we appreciate. A new impulse dawns toward the close of the Gang Age. As the group becomes less important, the special friend rises into significance. Many a hobo of fifteen became a hero in France. Many a boy who was in peace a cross to his parents has won the Croix de Guerre.

The lesson of every age is to use the characteristic impulses of that age for good. Puffer gives an admirable

illustration: If a teacher is forming squads for gymnastic work, she must not merely pick out half a dozen docile youths as leaders; she must make the squads of the size that naturally form in gangs and she must choose as leaders the boys who are actually leaders to the rest, and keep the same crowd together. Then she has really touched and guided the gang spirit. Think, then, at this age in terms of gangs as well as in terms of individuals or in terms of the whole group. Puffer's conclusion for this period is one to recall and recapture: "For certain purposes, at this stage, we may ignore the boy and attend to the boy group. After sixteen the group dissolves and once more we may take up the education of the individual." [1]

[1] J. Adams Puffer, *The Boy and His Gang*, p. 188.

BOOK SIX

THE AGE OF ROMANCE

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CHAPTER XVII

BEING COMME IL FAUT

When men speak of romance with a sneer we often listen with a weak smile implying that if it is n't all moonshine and calf love, it is at best an amiable delusion, a soft interlude between the sterner chapters of work and conflict. I have no quarrel with those who can honestly find no better examples of romance than this in their experience. Quarrel won't change them or me. But when I use the word "romance" I mean the most potent and creative power in the world, the union of ardent love for life with clear contempt for death, the spirit that makes men sacrifice themselves, not dourly, but with passion and joy. The supposed softness of romance is like the quiet, sinuous curve of a springboard descending under your poised feet before it flings you into space. Because of what we have seen, we dare. Because of loveliness that leaves us speechless and amazed, we are ready to attack anything inconsistent with it, no matter how huge and hopeless the venture. But in the moment of conviction, when first we kneel before the revelation of love, there is truly nothing

efficient or self-sufficient about us. We are not at all dapper or polished and so we may well look soft.

Indeed, we may be so if we never rise from ingathering reverence to creative action, if we slump into the mush of might-be and would-be and lose the moment for our leap. The artistic loafer and philanderer may talk and gesticulate of romance, yet break no law. He merely desecrates a noble word and breaks into useless fragments the best jewel of his own life. For romance is beatific vision and inspired action. Whoso breaks this marriage apart and then complains that the vision alone is useless, foolish, in short, *visionary*, is right enough in his conclusion about the mess he has made. But he need not call it romance, and we need not repeat his mistake. Let us avoid all verbal quarrels by pointing to the realities.

Romance is in the love and elopement of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning — breaking a well-meant but soul-destroying tyranny. Stevenson was romantic when he established his roof-tree on a tropic jungle clearing high up on a Samoan mountain-side. Garibaldi's romantic love of a united Italy brought success to his astoundingly foolhardy attempt to free his country with a force of a thousand men in red shirts. Such bursts of rejuvenated energy are rarely prolonged throughout a whole life-time. Indeed, they are rare enough in adult life. But in youth they are so notorious that they justify me in writing of the Age of Romance as a period to be expected and welcomed in every growing boy and girl.

March in New England is often almost as cold as February, yet something new happens to my window plants. They feel the coming of spring and put forth tiny green shoots. I almost catch them stirring to a mysterious experience. So as early as fourteen delicate intimations of new growth begin in uproarious boys or matter-of-fact girls. At first the change is nearly invisible, a wavering curve, a wild-rose color floated in, a look that flashes and vanishes like the passing of an oriole. Then week by week a young face grows into clearer and more certain beauty. Fortunately for the aspirations of the young, almost every ugly duckling has its enchanting, even if brief, moment of looking like a white swan.

I see one now entering the Age of Romance. Her eyes are too shy to look up as you pass, but her rosebud lips begin to curve delicately because her mouth is full of laughter. She goes every Sunday to church in her newest and best, she writes long diaries in secret, and in public with a trembling voice she excitedly expresses opinions on things in general.

There is a power not ourselves that makes for romance. She who two years ago wanted to clip her chestnut locks, wear pajamas and shirt-straps so as to be like daddy, she who maintained that all subjects should be publicly talked about, is now, suddenly, maidenly and modest. The fit of her waist worries her; she wonders whether divided skirts in "gym" are "decent," and decides they are not; she objects to conversation that

deals with illness or "insides." Her heart leaps up when she beholds a baseball hero, and she listens intent to novels that two years before she would have scorned as silly. She never expected to be like this. A new personality, a new set of ideas and sensations has taken possession of her. "I am the captain of my soul," wrote Henley proudly. He was wrong. Life itself jestingly inquires who is captain, as it steers a young and growing soul into harbors it dreams not of.

Though girls reveal most clearly nature's interest in drawing lines of beauty, boys too become clear-eyed and add to or detract from their charm by a dawning moustache and a new consciousness of how they should look. "Emerging to the street penniless," writes Booth Tarkington of Willie Baxter, "he bent a fascinated and dramatic gaze upon his reflection in a drug-store window."[1] It is not usual to mention it publicly, but how many mortals over twenty could hold up their right hands and solemnly swear they had never done the same from sixteen on?

There's one good side to this desire to see one's self as the window-pane sees us: it makes for cleanliness. He who never washed except under compulsion now scrubs his face till he looks like a polished rosy apple. "What's doing?" jeers his uncle. "Are you washing up for a low neck?" With the dawning of beauty, as in the instance just given, comes the desire to be more beautiful. Unfortunately the latter often undoes the former, for the

[1] Booth Tarkington, *Seventeen*.

desire to be beautiful may begin as a taste for vivid and unbecoming color. That pea-green shirt which Owen Johnson describes as alluring the heart and pennies of Stover at Yale, have n't we all bought it or its counterpart? Some colors fade; there are others that you pray to have fade. Of such are the pea-green shirts and the long-distance visible sweaters of youth. "How can you wear that mustard-colored coat?" I once ventured to remonstrate. "Why, I thought it was golden," was the surprised answer, and to her it was.

Yet when we look tenderly at the motive even for a mustard-colored coat, it has its transforming significance. Youth's desire to be beautiful, a little more beautiful than is possible, has something of the same motive as its desire to make the world a more perfect place for its dreams. Sixteen is a serious age. Even when it splurges in things of style it is so deeply concerned that it uses the terms of duty. One must be dressed *comme il faut* at all costs. I once knew a youth of seventeen who took a trip of fourteen hours by train from his mountain home to San Francisco in order to reappear before his friends in exactly the right kind of khaki trousers. Such devotion is serious and to be respected.

This desire to be *comme il faut* almost always spreads into a desire to have others behave better. Seventeen has new eyes to see defects. Criticism may first attack younger sisters, as Booth Tarkington has deliciously pointed out in his sketch of the bread-and-apple-sauce-

besmirched face of Jane suddenly revealed to the gallant William. Another time as he looks at her William sees with disgust that his scrawny little sister Jane has n't got enough on. "Hot weather is no excuse for downright obesity" is the way William puts it.[1] Criticism, though it begins with the younger members of the family, does not end there. It enlarges to include parents.

For many years mothers struggle to keep the children clean and tidy. There comes a time at fifteen or sixteen when the tables are suddenly turned. The son or daughter becomes all at once critical of the good manners and dress of his father and mother. "Dad's trousers are the limit," his son confides. "They bag terribly and he turns them up too far." The child has suddenly become responsible for the parent. It is the daughter now who looks to see that her mother has buttoned all the buttons on her shirtwaist, or who urges her to buy a more up-to-date suit. "My daughter Caroline is getting so critical of me. It's simply terrible!" laughed a kindly Philadelphian. "She does n't think any of my dresses stylish enough and she does n't approve of my table-manners at all. I try to do my best and I hurry the meals through just as quickly as possible. It's very embarrassing."

Happy is the mother who can see the humor of the situation when she is told by her serious daughter to mind her *p*s and *q*s, to dress in the fashion, and do her

[1] Booth Tarkington, *Seventeen*, p. 48.

hair in the latest style. "My chief and favorite division of people at sixteen," writes Tolstoy, "was into people who were *comme il faut* and people who were *comme il ne faut pas.* My *comme il faut* consisted first and chiefly in an excellent knowledge and pronunciation of French. . . . The second condition was long, clean, polished finger-nails; the third was a knowledge of how to bow, dance, and converse; and the fourth and very important one, was indifference to everything, and the constant expression of a certain elegant, scornful ennui. . . . The relation of his boots to his trousers instantly settled the status of the man in my eyes. . . . It is fearful to recall how much of my priceless time at the best period of life, sixteen, I wasted in the acquirement of this quality. I labored secretly at the French tongue, at the art of bowing, at conversation, at dancing, at cultivating indifference and ennui, and at my finger-nails! Without *comme il faut* there could be neither happiness nor glory nor anything good in the world." [1]

"Ben's an awful dude," scorns his younger brother Hal. "He won't stand the slightest bit of a speck on his necktie."

"Well, Ben's sixteen; he's got to the age when he cares about clothes," I answer.

"Gee, I should think he did!" shouts the younger brother as Ben emerges from his room immaculate and shining with youth and gaudiness. But strange to say, here is Hal three years later at the same stage.

[1] Tolstoy, *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, p. 320.

As social impulses dawn, differences of age count painfully. Outsiders are very much outside and are apt to feel neglected. For the self-centredness of this age often makes it cold and narrow. It holds a reversed Puritanical attitude. As the Puritans looked frigidly on any one who was gaudily dressed, so the Romantic Age looks coldly on any one who is out of the prevailing style. I believe this coldness of the Age of Romance is a form of self-protection like the shell of a horse-chestnut not ready to open: it must be hard-shelled lest problems come crushingly soon. Nevertheless the indifferent airs of the young may wound those older and younger alike. "One little year" is an unsurmountable bridge. Even in middle age a friend of mine remembers what sorrow mingled with scorn he felt when his cousin, two years older than he, a perfectly reliable athlete, developed the disgraceful characteristic of "wanting to sit and talk." He made an implicit agreement with himself. "I'll always keep to athletics. I'll never be foolish and talk on subjects for hours at a time." How could he know that life was on his track and that he too must fall into the craving for talk?

Many a parent has laughed as she noticed that the love of beauty in dress begins at the top. Your boy of sixteen dresses very carefully from the head, beginning with hair latest style, parted with frowning devotion before the mirror, and going down with full attention to the collar, very high and *chic*, necktie the fashionable color, waist-line slightly indented — "very neat" he and

his tailor call it. But below the waist his attention flags; trousers are objects of less concern than waistcoats, and boots he often considers not at all. They go for days unblacked. There will come a time when he gazes admiringly at his peaked trouser lines and his shining, pointed shoes, but not yet. Vanity begins in babies with their boots, but with youth at the apex. When he tries to see himself as others should see him, he begins face to face in the mirror.

Being *comme il faut* of course requires practice in learning how to talk. Modern theories in relation to babies under one year hold that through gurgling and cooing they are instinctively practising speech. Sixteen does something of the same sort. He practises not only on the banjo with excruciating sound, but on speech-making. He tries out a series of opinions overlarge for his full control. He dilates on foreign policy and domestic affairs — the shocking system of railroad transportation in New England, and the advantages of being a millionaire. I recall such a boy defending ardently the superiority of Germans over English — his main argument against the English running thus: "I don't like the English because they are awfully obstinate, but there is one good thing about them, they have fine long names like Buckingham and Castlereagh." Loose talk is that of sixteen, issuing with many an explosion and much nonsense, yet interesting as is the maiden speech of a new member of Parliament. Medicines are said to be tried on a dog; sixteen tries his views on the long-

suffering family when necessary, but prefers to confide them to a more rapt listener. He sounds intolerably conceited, but: "It's such fun to discuss. I wish I really knew anything," he remarks one day, and his house of cards gently falls. A few months later with the genial surprise of youth discovering itself: "Gee, I'm doing an awful lot of things now because I think I ought to. It's terrible." Exit dalliance. Enter duty.

The talk of boys with each other at this age is unbarbed teasing, hurting as little as a pillow fight and returned with laughter, extraordinarily different from the talk of girls, gossipy, pricking the absent. Boys pierce the wind-bag of those present and both laugh together over the escaping vapor. Girls are too apt to smooth the visible guest and throw burrs at the absent.

Humor, or rather the desire to acquire humor, is stronger in boys than in girls at this age, and is a part of their programme of learning speech. They test and sample it. Some think that just translating *good evening* into French gives lightness to the social atmosphere. Wings, even if sewn on, imply a desire to rise airily. Humor is essential. At this age humor is partly, I suppose, a defence against solemnity — that oncoming solemn tragedy of the age when problems of work, money, and marriage loom up like thunderstorms after a day of cumulus clouds.

Meanwhile girls are learning speech through more private utterances to each other. "Ma," said Polly, "what do you and Mrs. Brewer talk about all the time?"

Ma, vaguely: "Oh! I don't know. What do you and Helen talk about?"

Polly, definitely: "Why, boys and religion, of course."

Next to one-to-one talk comes the written word. I remember a summer long ago when I kept up a regular correspondence with eighteen girls at once; and at the same period I was busy writing nightly in a journal marked "*Private. To be burned at my death.*" Athletics tends to drive out maidenly diaries as sunlight drives out maidenhair ferns. Slang conceals the impulse to poetry. Listen to this description of the culture of Europe which poured out of the exquisite mouth of a maiden of seventeen whose soulful eyes would have persuaded you she was all a poem. It was her first trip to Europe with her father, and she was naturally thrilled as she left Liverpool with the world before her: "We boosted poor daddy onto the train after it was moving. He was very hot; but I guess he got away with it all right, for when we got to London he was dippy about the pictures. I was simply crazy about a Rembrandt man with a long plume and his head twisted sharp to one side. My descriptions are rather bum. Do you know the guy? He's got my goat. Oh! is n't Westminster Abbey classy?"

Yet beneath this surface slang, poetry hides. Every girl has moments of thinking in poetry, the poetry of her own future. Her thought follows the line of Mary Antin's: "I went out in the twilight and walked for hours, my blind feet leading me. . . . A fringe of trees against the sunset became suddenly the symbol of the whole

world and I stood and gazed and asked questions of it." "It seemed to me that I had been pursuing a single adventure since the beginning of the world, through highways and byways, underground, overground, by land, by sea, ever the same purpose had divided my affairs from other men's." [1]

It is not only girls who dream. Tolstoy's "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth" gives almost the same experience: "After supper I went off alone to sleep on the floor of the veranda which afforded me great pleasure in spite of the millions of mosquitoes which devoured me. When the moon was at the full I often spent whole nights seated on my mattress gazing at the lights and shadows, listening to the stillness and the noise, dreaming of poetic and voluptuous bliss." [2] All night! This period of youth is a time of extraordinary vitality and resilience. Have you not memories of talking in the dark with your best friend sitting on your bed till four in the morning and never feeling fatigue?

"I declare! young girls are queer things," said the father of five. "They don't need any sleep all the week if they can catch up on Sundays. There's Hilda has danced all night, passed a three hours' examination, and now she's off on a picnic." Youth recuperates out of its own medicinal gladness, gladness that, thank God, even a long strain or a piercing sorrow cannot often break.

Sixteen not only sleeps the sleep of the unresponsible; it eats with an unearned appetite all that life will supply.

[1] Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*, pp. 298 and 296. [2] Page 326.

Every one knows, and housekeepers must daily anticipate, the ravenous hunger of youth. He had eaten his fifth tart and looked wistfully at a sixth. "Don't you want another?" "No," he said regretfully, "I ought not to. I'm afraid I'd grow too husky." But here a happy solution occurred to him. "I tell you what I'll do. I'll take it up in my room and eat it in the afternoon." I was not so brutal as to suggest that the question of huskiness was still involved!

It is not only physical appetite that rises unquenchable after adolescence as after typhoid. It is appetite for life itself. Such appetite demands a bounteous supply. I've seen a young creature who had kept still all one evening, leap in the air the minute her mother's guests had gone, pirouette till her foot touched her shoulder, and jump over the nearest table. Her restrained body and soul burst like a geyser from underground. "Oh! I'm so strong," she shouted to the vacant room, "I don't know what to do with myself!" It would be difficult to give enough outlet to a girl like this except that, fortunately for mothers, youth can suck adventure out of the smallest pools. Two girls sat opposite to me on my trip from Boston to San Francisco. They were bubbling with joy; adventurous with almost the dauntlessness of the Dramatic Age, but far less serious. The day was too short even in the confines of a Pullman car. "Oh! I just can't go to bed." At each station they were off after flowers to press. They sprinted with long strides to get back before the engine started. Each little meal they

prepared on the train, out of dainties brought from home, was the source of gleeful surprise. Every Devil's Slide was noted down at once in a forty-page letter, just as the train rounded the corner. The Winged Age, like the Dramatic Age, releases adventure from tiny prisons. All places are possible haunts of adventure to youth, but some places are magnets and draw irresistibly. "How well I remember my excitement about Harvard Square!" laughed a happily married woman. "I could n't go near it without trembling with excitement. And now! I can't get up a quiver."

When I was seventeen I visited a gentle and fragile great-aunt who lived peaceably on the fringe of a gay seaside resort. Two very fat dappled grays and a coachman, also fat and dappled gray, took us daily to drive — say rather to amble. If we went four miles I could touch Paradise. There I could see faces that roused memory and tinglings, one face especially. Usually my unconscious companion signalled the coachman to turn just as we neared Paradise, and back we jogged over the uneventful road. My game was to get her reminiscing so hard that she forgot where we were, and then — oh joy! — we entered Eden. Sometimes I saw the right face, sometimes not; but it was all hope and adventure until she remembered that it was getting late. It was extraordinary with how very little attention, without interrupting my flying train of thought, I managed to carry on a desultory conversation. The thoughts of girls and boys circle off and light only now and then before the

present moment. My aunt, with her gentle stream of memory flowing quietly on, little dreamed of the wind blowing up the waves of my anticipation.

Fifteen is romance attracted but unattached, exquisite as a butterfly just forcing its sticky wings to soar. It has escaped the cramping cocoon of ill-health and suddenly it sees a shining world where before in its isolation it had seen only dark and fuzzy walls. "Is n't life just too wonderful, it is so exciting!" she exclaims. She wants the whole of it, but especially the other sex. As little children hold the peculiar charm of unconcern with sex, so this *Blüthezeit* has a flowering of sex-interest sweet and unconscious as the sudden scent of a grapevine in June. The romance of sixteen is like light without corresponding heat, surprisingly clear and cool. Though it has, unlike childhood, an awakened love, it is still a disengaged love for the other sex. Boys and girls, blissful in each other's society, sit quite dumb or speak casually of nothing at dancing or skating parties. They are happy just in presence and in the present. They have no nesting plans. Not till later comes the glow of knowing they may be fruitful before the Lord. Delicate filaments, invisible as a spider's webs when the light is beyond them, attach the present exquisite gaiety to future responsibility. Eyes that are now full of play will some day widen into looks of consecration.

But now boys and girls have just begun to know that they need each other: "Are there any masculines at

New Atlantic?" writes sixteen to fifteen. "If there are, be sure to write me all about them. I went to a dance last Tuesday and Charlie was there. I hate him — but I would n't hate him if I was n't perfectly sure he dislikes me. He said good-night to Laura and said he hoped he would see her in New York, and he did not say good-night to me at all. I'm so jealous of Laura. It's awful to have somebody liked better than you are. One of the boys I like at dancing school is awfully unpopular," she went on. "It's good fun to like an unpopular boy. He dances atrociously; you have to skate round to avoid hitting his feet. I did n't like him much till one day he told me about wanting to go in for aviation. He hopes the war will last till he has a chance. Of course he wants it to end, you know, but he wants to be in it. There's another boy I just despise. He is very common and he says, 'Hello, Sally,' in an amorous tone."

CHAPTER XVIII

FIRST LOVE

THIS period of blossoming is so full of gaiety that we tend to forget it holds any problem. But in the latter part, and for girls especially, we may have to face a very difficult situation. It is better to face it squarely than to cast a sidelong glance at it.

If I were to write an eleventh commandment it would be this: "Honor thy son and thy daughter in the time of their first love, that it may be sacred unto thee." It is not easy. Good Heavens, what rescue of a great hope from drowning is easy! First love looks foolish like a gawky squab. And when it is, as it often is, an intense and exaggerated adoration of girl for girl, we are apt with a certain justification to call it abnormal. Yes, the passion often is lopsided and unstable, but the whole point is that it stands for something. Even as the sick man, who is abnormal, too, points to health, so the first efforts at flowering of a young vine, though they fail of fruit, point to fertility and are full of hope. Here in the crude beginnings of love we must see an essay at beauty. Above all we must see hope when the affair looks not only hopeless, but worse than that, humorless or even tragic.

Of course, as I said above, this is not easy. One of the most difficult problems any of us have to deal with is this

perverted manifestation of a great feeling. The love of friends, of man and wife, of parent and child, these are exquisite. The furtive passion of girl for girl or the fascination of a sensible boy by a silly girl, like the amazing Miss Pratt in Booth Tarkington's "Seventeen," are often as annoying to the average parent as they were to Willie Baxter's father. The teacher finds herself stamping impatiently over the same problem. Here is one girl flirting with another or following in the trail of a pretty gymnasium instructor. "Reprimand the teacher; dismiss the girl. Let girls see plenty of boys and fall in love with one of them," enunciates the head of a students' dormitory. "This girl worship is all morbid."

Yes, it is often enough foolish, ridiculous, and morbid, but that is not all it is. Behind the fool, the jest and the invalid, if you look — oh! if you really look with the creative eyes of faith — something else peers shyly forth — love that is ready for absolute devotion. It has mistaken its object! It is going at it in the wrong way! All the more careful you must be not to kill it. The most beautiful vines wander. Left unguided a honeysuckle will bend back on itself and on its neighbors, stifling its life and theirs by its own profusion. You break a large, annoying strand only to find that much you meant to save has wilted. It was all twisted together. Sentimentality seems like the distorted reflection in a dingy mirror of what is too precious to be so treated. Yet it does not mend the matter to smash the mirror. Love — even foolish love — worship — even worship at the wrong

shrine — cannot be broken and thrown aside without injury to love itself and to worship. Suppose we try some other solution first.

I will take up a group of the most difficult cases, those of the infatuation of girls for each other and for women. In one case I remember the situation came up like this: Sensible mother: "It's perfectly terrible! I used to think Eleanor too cold and matter-of-fact, and hoped something would rouse her to be more enthusiastic. But I've had more than enough of her ardor now! She came home to-day from school just bursting with superlatives and sentiment. 'Oh, mother, Katharine is the most beautiful person I've ever seen! She has such eyes! It just breaks my heart! She's had the hardest time, and she's the wisest and loveliest person in the world!' That's the way the conversation goes whenever Eleanor returns home. 'Are you free, mother? Do come up to my room, I must talk to you about Katharine.' Katharine, Katharine all the time — is n't there anybody else in the world! One day," said the mother, "I ventured to suggest that a part of the tragic things that had happened to her might be Katharine's own fault. Fire blazed in Eleanor's eyes: 'If you talk that way of Katharine I'll never, never speak to you about her again!'"

Eleanor's mother, sensible and serenely affectionate, found this undiluted adoration intolerable. I happened to be associated with the high school to which these two girls went, and nobody who went into that school

could fail to notice Eleanor and Katharine. They were as noticeable as Siamese twins. Eleanor was a masterful girl, though she had forgotten so far to master herself. She was of the type often called masculine. Katharine's dreamy, poetic eyes looked up with wonder to the heights her friend so firmly trod. The devotion of the girls to one another reached such a point that they crowded every room they entered, and marked private a wide circle around every table at which they sat. Before long the high school was buzzing and these two were cut off as by a barbed-wire fence from all their former friends. Every one was afraid to speak because every one felt like an outsider.

Yet from the inside the situation was really accessible. The two girls, as so often happens, needed the help they knew not how to ask. As soon as they felt any sympathy with the depth and reality of their love for one another and its great possibilities for good, they were ready to recognize — what I think they vaguely knew — that they were cramping one another's lives by their exclusiveness. They really loved one another; love wants to include all blessings in the life of the loved one. When they faced the fact that they were taking away rather than giving by their exclusive devotion they were willing, for each other's sake, to control demonstration and even to face separation. The girls were serious; they took the need of separation as they would any sacrifice, and they deliberately kept more apart and drew in others to their group. Gradually into the unsmothered space new

friends drifted; their coming cleared the atmosphere and the whole relation became normal.

Whenever there is good stifled it can be released. For love, however confused, aspires toward the best. Separation of friends too closely attached may, like the separation of smoking logs, mean new air, flame, reunion. I inwardly rebel when I hear girls' intense devotion to one another called abnormal. True it may become so, but it is equally true that through this experience, when it is openly faced, the friends may come to learn much of the holiness and obligation of love and be in part prepared for the more searching experience of love for their future mates.

Girl's love for girl and boy's for boy may be lasting and ennobling even when it is intense. Witness this autobiographical fragment written by a girl of twenty-four as she looked back on her experience at boarding-school: "Her life at eighteen was devotion to her roommate. All her other playmates were playmates. Patricia seemed a rare and lovely thing, to be worshipped, admonished, and savagely protected. Jane loved her with a love a father gives his only daughter. It's an amazing thing, the first deep love a girl gives, whether it be to another girl or to a boy, to a parent or a little sister — the tenderness, wholeness, abnegation of it, and again the amazing capacity for pain."

I can hardly read this description without reverence for the relationship as well as for the girls. However it may have looked to the outsider, it had in it a nobility

that is beyond comment. In this case the emotion lasted, but even where it is temporary it may still open new vistas of experience.

Here is an unusually enlightening description of both the good and the harm of such an experience. It is written by a girl of nineteen looking whimsically back on her past: "From twelve to sixteen I was in that terrible Byronic period which is full of pinnacles and black abysses, transit from the former to the latter taking less than a half-minute in time. Oh! the intensity of emotion then, joy so intense that violent physical expression seems a necessity, melancholy so profound that involuntarily one bursts forth into a snatch of song or utters some insane ejaculation to get away from it for a moment. I was in turn a religious zealot, an atheist, a candidate for the stage, and an ornithologist. Each phase was all-absorbing; each passed as gustily as it arrived. My family found it somewhat wearying. I thought them unsympathetic.

"When I was fifteen I formed a 'grand passion' for a woman many years my senior. To her I poured out the short story of my life, my aspirations, my gloomy forebodings and my fascinatingly interesting speculations on life, death, birth, marriage, and the futility of existence. My motto at this time was, 'Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all.' (I did not always think life futile!) Miss Jackson introduced me to birds and my adoration for her extended itself to her feathered friends. We really had heavenly times

when we went birding. I remember with peculiar pleasure still the afternoon we first saw the scarlet tanager, sitting on a bush full of small new leaves and splashed with sunshine.

"Curiously enough, deep inside of me, sturdily suppressed and never faced, I felt a slight contempt for her. In our family we have always laughed at one another, never unkindly, I think, but we each have idiosyncrasies and foibles, amusing to ourselves and to the other members. My palm-leaf crosses, my dramatic school circulars, my doglike devotion to Miss Jackson and my 'soul,' were made sport of so cleverly that I really thought them rather diverting too, and made fun of myself even though I repented it later in anguished hours. I felt (this quite acknowledged) that Miss Jackson should n't take me so seriously as she did. This could hardly have been more unreasonable since to have my long-winded confessions taken seriously was precisely what I wanted. Later I found her total lack of humor less and less tolerable for an idol, so I removed the pedestal and on her two feet on *terra firma* she was very nice.

"At about sixteen I changed a great deal. My moods were less tumultuous and exhausting. I gave up my long reveries and hours and hours with books, and I enjoyed the companionship of my contemporaries more and more. 'Thank God, that is over,' said my father reverently."

Thank God, that is over! Well, that is one solution — to wait impatiently as one waits for the end of a play one

is bored by. But there are better solutions than this. First of all I believe we must get the inside point of view, as one of my friends calls it — the ability, that is, to see others as they see themselves. Mr. Henry Endicott once cleverly illustrated this effective inside point of view in a speech on the relations of labor and capital.[1]

"In a country town there was a mule which was a great favorite. The children and grown people were both very fond of that mule. One day 'Billie' was lost, and there was a great commotion. They hunted everywhere for that mule and did not find him. Up to noon they hunted, without result. Finally a farmer who lived about six miles out of town came in and asked, 'What is going on? Is it a holiday?' 'No, Billie is lost.' 'Can't you find him?' 'No, we can't.' The farmer went off, was gone half an hour, and came back with Billie. 'How did you find Billie?' 'Why,' was the reply, 'I just thought like a mule, and then I walked straight to him.'"

Even a mule appreciates having his thoughts understood. And at the other extreme from a dull mule, boys and girls bewildered by a tremendous rush of emotion long to have it understood. I recall a time when, just as I was most irritated by what certainly seemed a sentimental relation if ever there was one, the girl concerned scattered my irritation to the winds by murmuring, with awe and reverence in her voice, "It is a wonderful thing to have any one care for you as much as that."

[1] Henry B. Endicott, *Getting Together*. Tremont Temple, Boston, May 20, 1919. Published by the Old Colony Trust Company.

I knew she was right. Surely it is, it is! Even the Willie Baxters of life and fiction are meeting the experience that "love is a sacred thing"; learning to dress with care, even when it is in borrowed plumage, to write poetry, even if it is atrocious poetry, to dream nobly, even if the nobility is mostly in dreams — all this has in it nobility and the capacity for heroism.

> "Love is too young to know what Conscience is;
> But who knows not, Conscience is born of love."

To get the inside point of view (empathy rather than sympathy in scientific slang) is entirely to drop one's irritation. Irritation is an unmistakable symptom of the outside point of view. I do not mean that we should never condemn such affairs. On the contrary, condemnation is sometimes an inside point of view; it may bring to light what is dimly, restively known by those who are doing wrong. When Jesus told the men who brought the adulteress to be stoned, "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone," he took the inside point of view in relation to them, and instantly *self*-condemned, not condemned by him, they slunk away. So again when he condemned the money-changers in the Temple, he cut through the superficial wrappings of self-deceit that had allowed them to buy and sell in the house of prayer and penetrated at one stroke to what they knew as right. He showed them to themselves because he saw from inside their souls. Condemnation that grows out of sympathy may be of untold value in clearing up a murky situation.

"What do you do about so-called crushes?" I once asked this question of the wise head of a girls' school. "Why, I tell my girls that they should have all possible friendships with one another as long as there is nothing *furtive* in the relation." "Just what would furtive imply?" I questioned further. She had too much sense to define. "All the girls know what furtive is and why it is wrong." She reiterated the word: "If there is nothing furtive about their feeling it will only do them good." I saw her meaning. We always know the clandestine in ourselves just as we know when we are lying. Girls themselves use the word "crush" to describe a clandestine relation and recognize it as foolish, wrong, unworthy. The word "crush," wherever it came from, is a good one to describe the effects of any furtive relation. The best in sight is crushed and wounded. A noble possibility is held in ignoble usage. Condemn, then, when condemnation is fair, but condemn because you see something glorious to be saved, not something tiresome to be irritated by or laughed at.

The calling of a false emotion by a bad name, such as "crush," may in the earliest stages prevent it from growing, but only before the feeling has a secure hold. If we meet in full growth this danger-breeding situation, I believe it can only be helped by being taken seriously. Laughter is an affair of beginnings and ends when there is leeway to spare. But he who feels intensely has no free space for a joke. He can't see the fun of it. Laughter is a form of spiritual separation from the object laughed

at. Spiritual or physical separation may be good in early stages of a "crush," but more often it is greater, and not less, connection that gives nobility to the dream of youth. Bring home the situation. Bring home the boy or girl. I believe there is nothing so curative of the wrong affection or so stimulating to the right, as the chance to see it near to and in comparison with others instead of in an isolated vision. The object cannot loom so large among other objects; its mystery, when it survives, is the mystery of light not of darkness.

Another great help in straightening twisted relationships is definite service, the harnessing of emotion into the cart of duty. I recall an older girl who was adored by one of the younger ones in her school. She spoke about it long afterward: "In boarding-school one girl fell in love with me and used to sit outside my window in her nightgown during November nights watching my light. I thought she was all wrong, but I could n't help her much then. She was neglecting her family and I did make her see that and turn to them more." "The main difficulty," said this woman as she looked back at these boarding-school days, "is that one is wallowing in emotion rather than serving."

Dangerous as is emotion without service, it holds perhaps less danger in this age than in any other. We must never forget that it is an age of dreams. We cannot help our children much till we realize that their minds are often far away. Apparently we speak to listeners, for they have learned at school or college the artful way of

appearing attentive. But really we are speaking to an empty house. If suddenly I should shout, "Where are you?" a boy might name a living-room on Fifth Avenue, a beach at Newport, a supper hall at the Copley-Plaza, a battlefield in France. So all the time that his friends were arguing that he should escape from prison, Socrates heard the sound of a more impelling voice calling him like the sound of a flute. Do we not need to know to what voices youth is listening during the years from sixteen to eighteen? Tolstoy, one of the greatest of interpreters of a passionate youth, gives us in part the answer, for though Russia can never be America, the Age of Romance is more akin in all countries than any later period of mankind.

Tolstoy definitely names four dreams common to youth. "First was," he says, "my love for her, the ideal woman . . . whom I expected to meet somewhere at any moment. Second, love of love. I wanted to have every one know and love me. I wanted to pronounce my name Nikolai Irteneff and have every one, startled by this information, surround me and thank me for something. The third feeling was the hope of some remarkable good fortune. . . . I was so sure that I should soon become the greatest and most distinguished man in the world in consequence of some extraordinary circumstance or other, that I found myself constantly in a state of agitated expectation of something enchantingly blissful. I was always expecting it was *about to begin* . . . and I was always hastening about in all directions, sup-

posing that it was already beginning where I was not. The fourth and principal feeling was disgust with myself and remorse, but a remorse so mingled with hope of bliss and passionate desire for perfection that the blacker the circle of the past, the brighter did the rainbow hues of the future stand out against it.

"The reformation of all mankind, the annihilation of vices and miseries appeared a practical thing. It seemed very easy to reform one's self, to acquire all virtues and be happy. But God only knows whether these lofty aspirations of youth were ridiculous and who was to blame if they were not fulfilled." [1]

Surely we must be reverent of dreams like these and with God's help turn them toward fulfilment, for with all their laughable, isolated optimism they hold something *right* after all. Instant reform, surging righteousness, are they not better than our prudent delay, our worldly doubt?

[1] *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth*, pp. 212 and 202, translated by Isabel Hapgood.

CHAPTER XIX

FROM RECREATION TO SACRIFICE

ONE fact is newly startling in the Age of Romance, even though it is forced upon us again and again. Youth at sixteen and seventeen can leap with as great rapidity from a noble idea to a trivial one, as it can from a roof to the lawn. In both cases it is the parent who is jarred rather than the boy. Life among young things is exciting because you never know when their thoughts will be engaged with the stars and when with apple-pie. You will find the same lad who plunged into theology early in the afternoon plunging into a third help of beef half an hour later with equal zest and absorption. Thank God for the many-sided vigor of youth. I believe that these sudden plunges may like ploughing destroy the weeds of morbidness. Ideals cannot be looked at long by the young without self-consciousness and pallor.

I once launched on a discussion with a boy of my acquaintance on the value or uselessness of religion. He argued hotly; then came silence. A moment later he gave a queer little squeal. "What's the matter?" I asked. "Are you ill?" "Oh, no, I was just thinking." I pricked up my theologically inclined ears. "Thinking of what?" and received the following unexpected answer: "Why, I used to think that when your mouth

was shut, it was a hollow space inside, but it is n't. It's all full of tongue."

Because romance is dominant in this period it draws out much of what in its dignified form is known as art — love of music, of painting. Oh, yes, I know that the choice in music is ragtime, jazz bands, and musical comedies, and that the choice in art is of comic posters and cloying young ladies who fill chock-a-block the covers of fifteen-cent magazines. True; yet any interest is a point of entrance that may be enlarged. The only axiom is to give as recreation the best that can be received. This is not necessarily the best we can imagine. When I have tried to water a plant after a long drought, I have often found the soil so parched and caked that the water it needs will at worst run off the surface and at best take a long time before it unites with the earth. Sometimes we are too starved to be able to eat. Sometimes we are too "fed up" with spiced food to absorb what is nourishing. A jazz band with its intense rhythm may make Kreisler's violin seem faint and thin for a time. To learn to like more delicate and subtle music is re-education, and all re-education means patience on the part of the teacher and on the part of the learner the desire and effort to improve.

So when Jane Addams suggests beautifully that we loosen the susceptibility of sex from the things of sense and link it to imagination, that we "speed it on with laughter, snatches of song, the recovered form of old

dances and the traditional rondels of merry games," we need to remember that it is part of the mingled hope and tragedy of experience that new wine will often burst the old bottles. Old folk-dances appeal less to the young than to the middle-aged. Our hope is that newer and stronger bottles can be found.

Do we not often, in planning recreation for those younger than ourselves, fluctuate between two extremes — forcing upon them the abstractly good, the games they *ought* to like and don't, and the other extreme of letting them go their own way to the limit? How often we interpret "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you" so literally that we insist on giving out of our bounty what we like and the receiver detests! How kindly we bestow "Plutarch's Lives" on the boy craving Henty, and square-toed shoes on the girl pining to be fashionable!

Yet there is the other extreme, not false giving, but false giving-up. I believe that in social recreation we often give far less than can be received. We show no ingenuity, no resourcefulness in making a new form of social life more attractive than the conventional one. Substitute water for wine and how few will choose it! Some new appeal must be made. I very much doubt whether the most intelligent buds and freshmen are satisfied with present conditions. Here is the answer of a gay and popular girl to the question whether coming-out parties are good or bad:

"Personally I dislike the idea of 'coming out.' It seems terribly artificial to me, and I believe a girl can have just as much fun and experience going to small parties, meeting people in an intimate way during the winter months and in the summer having a rollicking good out-of-door life. Without doubt, large balls, receptions and teas, formal luncheons and dinners help in making a girl tactful, full of poise, and a splendid hostess, but I do not think they make her the least bit interesting. During the year of her début she rarely makes any new girl friends and the only time she sees men, especially new acquaintances, is when she dances with them, and then only light conversation is heard. Almost every girl the summer after she has 'come out' is unusually self-satisfied. She thinks only of her good times, and of how many men she can have crazy about her at a time. She cannot speak unless it is light, frivolous babble. This, of course, wears off in time, but why ever experience it? I dislike it all so much I highly disapprove of coming out. Nevertheless I *have* to, but I am glad to say my party will take place in a small community where I can have a perfect time without forgetting other people.

"There are many ways parties can be improved; in the first place, if less liquor was served it would be more enjoyable at many dances. I think often too many guests are invited to make it even worth while trying to get on the floor to dance. The crowds simply overcome you.

. . . .

"It seems to me the best ways for boys and girls between eighteen and twenty to get to know each other are through informal parties, summer gaieties, winter sports, and in the homes of both the boys and the girls. The only time I ever got to know boys was in the summer and my experience confirms me in this idea. During the winter I was away in boarding-school, so summer at home seemed just too wonderful. We always had very informal tennis, picnics, swimming parties, surfing parties, motor trips, and any number of small dances. In this way boys and girls were friends and companions to each other and we had just the best times ever. I suppose you would get to know men just as well in the winter by sleigh-riding, coasting, skating, and all the other winter sports. Home life, too, has a great deal of influence and nothing can be more genuine than seeing a boy in his home and with his parents and relatives, and a girl under the same conditions."

"Coming out," writes another girl of eighteen, "always seems to me rather a poor way of spending one's time. If a girl really 'does it up brown' she is just wasting time, not helping others and not even improving herself by study and companionship with the worth-while thinkers and workers of the world. Her little world narrows down to the circle of acquaintances who attend all the big parties with her. She meets only a small percentage of people who are above her own intellectual and moral standing. Then, too, it seems to me a

pity for a girl to thus advertise herself as having no other aim than to marry; to say, 'Here I am. Come, marry me. There is nothing else I can or care to do.' And if she is hunting for a husband merely, she is not likely to find the best in character, brains, and ambition in the set of those with whom she plays daily. . . . One thing I believe every one would really welcome would be some regulation about closing at least by one o'clock. After that the fun turns into thinking how late it is and what fun it will be to tell your friends you were at a 4 A.M. party; but all the while your feet are aching so you really would love to get into your comfortable bed, and you feel pretty sure you are looking as much of a wreck as you feel."

When I read evidence like this, I am convinced that it is largely the weakness and resourcelessness of parents that makes social life as unnourishing as it is. We have surrendered too limply to the current of the time. We do this not only in "social life," but in music, drama, and books. A lover of music and of men (Professor Archibald Davison) tells me that the soldiers at Camp Devens grew under guidance to prefer a spirited folk-song like "Men of Harlech" to "Over There," and that they became gradually but permanently bored by the poorer music. Artificial selection, too, may help here and there. I know a wise aunt who assures her nephew that he can go at her expense to any classic concert or theatre, and though he has a hard struggle between the

jazz band paid for by himself and Mischa Elman paid for by his aunt, the best often wins out.

The love of good music was in this instance artificially encouraged. Love of the best in art is more normal and stronger-rooted when it has from early years surrounded children in attractive forms. Good is normally stronger than evil. The home proves itself stronger than a boarding-house since we come back to it. We may be restive and range, but we range from a centre or it would not be ranging. Every woman knows that every man after marriage refers wistfully to mother's pies. It has become a popular joke. It's a mighty good joke, for if the husband reverts to childhood's cooking so will youth revert to childhood memories of Scott's novels, Millet's pictures, Barrie's plays, Schubert's songs, after he has tasted Ouida or ragtime. Plant ideals and tastes young and their roots will be strong.

The years just before an appointed task grips us are surely the years for range — spiritual and physical travel to the ends of the earth, down radically to feel the roots of things way under ground; wide, that we may begin to know the scope of the world's great interests. Socialistic, even anarchistic youth may be, as it goes its free, impassioned way to make the world anew, untrammelled by any political or traditional difficulties. Just as the World War ended, a boy of seventeen who, aiming at France, under age as he was, had drilled in season and

out, but had never left this continent of ours, wrote to me: "You can't depend on this old war any more and there is no telling what is going to happen to us now. It seems too bad to fool around in uniform when there is no fighting. The United States ought to rush around with its huge army and reform the world now that there is the chance."

Reform the world — remould it nearer to the heart's desire — that is the dream of youth. It is a dream of wide-reaching and heroic action. That is why there is an aspect to the Age of Romance other than that of *dolce far niente*. Youth day-dreams. Yes, but what if the day has come? Then like an arrow the dreamer flies straight to his goal. The impulse to noble deeds is hidden like a germ in the heart of the dream. The dry call to business or to factory work cannot make its petals unfold. But under the radiant flame of love or the scorching flames of war it will flower in a single night.

"*Der Tag*," that word of awful portent, came to the soul of our American youth not with the sound of conquest and lust for blood, but with the voice of consecration. "This day is thy soul required of thee." The day-dreamer heard the call and Romance leapt to reality. Said a German prisoner to his American captor: "What I can't understand is how you Americans got enough boats to come over in." "It took but one boat," answered the American soldier, "the Lusitania." The soul of every American boy leapt to the rescue of those murdered women and children, and therein romance

through the link of chivalry became grim performance. It was perhaps peculiarly among the youngest men that the impulse to sacrifice was strongest. The coming of war launched suddenly on the world a white-sailed fleet of boys, under age, but passionate to serve. Who can forget the scene in Wells's "Mr. Britling" where the son tells his father he has faked his age and enlisted? The English incident is unforgettable because it was a prophecy, an advancing wind of what the United States too came to know as boy after boy stood before his parents, shy and stuttering, or eager and eloquent, asking for a chance to face death at the front.

Love of danger, love of sacrifice, is characteristic of this age. How blurringly we've used the word "love" in this phrase, "love of sacrifice." We have almost run the words together as carelessly as when we speak of love-of-money. But now we know what tones must have been in the voice of some Roland who first used the impassioned words. Our youth is in love with sacrifice, as Saint Francis was in love with his Lady Poverty. And for this cause many a mother, standing near her changed son, has wondered why for the first time he does not seem to love her as he did, that he seems aloof, lost in a vision. She had known that some day he would love another woman more than he loved her, but not that he would love danger, that danger from which all his life she had tried to protect him. "You see, I only want to save his life and he only wants to give it," one woman said to me when her only son of seventeen asked to enlist

in the Canadian army. But she could not save him, for prudence to him then was spiritual death.

John Jay Chapman, in the memoir of his son Victor, describes the kind of scene which went on in a thousand homes when the son of the house asked to go into danger and was refused: "Just before his enlistment in August, 1914, there occurred a scene between Victor, his step-mother, and myself, which was our domestic part of the great war drama. No doubt millions of families on which the wheels of fate were then turning can recall similar little dramas in which the dies of life and death were thrown for them. We were all in a London hotel, having fled the Continent at the mobilization. The English people were singing the *Marseillaise* in front of the Parliament Houses. Victor had been prowling about in a lonely way for twenty-four hours, and he now, with a hang-dog humility, suggested that he was going to enlist. I reasoned with him. With that stupidity which is the natural gift of parents, I probed his conscience and suggested that perhaps it was merely a random desire to see life and get rid of his serious duties that led him to the idea of enlistment. He concurred, with dumb diffidence, and said: 'No doubt this must be it.' My wife says that I called him a quitter and held him up to the scorn of just men. But my own idea was that I was only preventing the lad from doing something which was not fundamentally his duty. He submitted. I supposed he was merely being rational; but there was a something in his voice and manner, something, I know not what,

of a soul-tragedy, that struck his stepmother and gave her a vision of a ruined life. And as soon as Victor had left the room, she said: 'He has submitted through his humility and through his reverence for you. But I had rather see him lying on the battle-field than see that look on his face.' Within a week he was in France." [1]

"I would rather see him dead than look like that." Yes, for that look is death and only in acceptance is life.

One such scene of struggle I shall never forget. A son of seventeen had asked his mother if he could enter aviation. He was her only son, her idol, and his father was dead. Like many another parent she had hugged the thought that he was under the draft age and that the war would soon be over. But one autumn day he wrote from his country school asking her to meet him in the city. He had passed the aviation tests, he said, and he must have her consent to enter the Flying Corps immediately. She hoped I might persuade him to give up the plan; she asked me to see him with her. He met us at the railway track. There was a new, youthful tenderness in his voice as he spoke to her, youthful because still shy and wistful, and yet mature, for it was the tone in which he will some day speak to his wife when she is tremulous. "There is no time to spare," he said; "will you come to the waiting-room and talk it out?" We sat in a far corner of the waiting-room. The restless

[1] *Victor Chapman's Letters from France.* With Memoir by John Jay Chapman. New York, Macmillan Company, 1917.

heterogeneous crowd moving about looked at us curiously, but he stood unseeing opposite to us, slender, pale, worn with sleeplessness, and poured out his carefully prepared speech. One knew, with a kind of humorous compassion, that he had rehearsed it aloud, overnight, not because he meant to be dramatic, but because he must win out, and eloquence was his cue.

The speech was n't very eloquent after all, but the speed and passion of youth was in it, infinitely more touching than eloquence. Aviation was the chivalry of war; he could not keep out of it. Three million men had died already. What was he, that he should hold back and save his skin? The Flying Corps was magnificent. (Squeezed up in his hand he had a book about it, and he stretched out the book like a gavel.) Only the very best men, physically fit, could get into aviation. It was the greatest chance he had ever had in his life. If the war ended and he not in it, he would never get over the blow. And then eloquence ended and his eyes filled. Of course there was but one issue. It is easy at the outset to imagine that there are two doors out — the door of acceptance and the door of refusal — but in great moral issues one of the two is barred to those whose hands are sensitive through love.

When, four months later, her son was badly injured in practice flying, his mother made no moan. Her will was one with his, with what he saw but did not name as God's will. "There is a quality in my son, it is in all of the boys. I have felt it before the war," she said.

"It is something he really wanted to do even while he was rollicking about or painting the town red. I never could name it before, but now I can. Boys want self-sacrifice."

Oh! we must not pass unscathed the fiery lesson of the Great War, the lesson that we have given youth soft ease when it required hardship, self-centredness, as in "coming out," when it thirsted for sacrifice, lectures and Latin when it demanded a test. Is it not characteristic that boys form secret societies with severe initiations involving burning and slashing? They want tests of courage. They must know whether they are cowards, they must win their spurs. So we must learn from the choices of youth itself, as we learn from the wavering strands of the morning-glory that it wants to climb; from the sparrow picking at straws that it wants to build. Even the reluctant mother hen must learn from her ducklings that they need to swim. Every age of childhood and youth indicates its own direction. It gropes, it is eccentric, it may go far astray, but it always points, and sometimes points far into its own future.

As I sat writing under the oak-tree two girls, their pink-and-white dresses lit up by the low afternoon sun, their faces lighted with youth and beauty, drifted along the path. "We did not mean to interrupt you," they said, "we were talking about how we'd bring up our children. Mine are going to know the Bible very well and learn a great deal of poetry." "And mine," said the other very earnestly, "are going to study history."

The distant future was already a mountain-top to these girls of eighteen and in their moments together they chose it to talk of.

So writes Tolstoy in his "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth" of the blossoming age of sixteen: "As soon as we were alone Dmitri Nehkliudoff and I seated ourselves in some quiet nook and began to discuss, forgetful of everything and perceiving not how the time flew. We talked of the future life, of the arts, of government service, and marriage and bringing up children, and it never entered our heads that all we said was the most frightful nonsense. It never occurred to us, because the nonsense we talked was wise and nice nonsense and in youth one still prizes wisdom and believes in it." [1]

I once walked up a stiff, dusty trail in the Sierras, dragging foot above foot slowly enough, for slipping stones pulled me back at each step. Part-way to the top a tall, obscuring screen of red firs gave away suddenly and I came out into a dazzling beautiful mountain meadow. It lay there, shut in by great trees — a magic vision of cool green. A stream ran softly across the even lawn. Wild cyclamen, white violets, and asters were sprinkled over the plain like a field of heaven sown with rainbow stars. It was solitary, yet I felt that some one had just passed by, that sounds of delicate song and laughter were still echoing to the attentive ear. It recalled the meadow where the angels of Fra Angelico

[1] Isabel Hapgood's translation, p. 200.

dance softly to the glory of God. It was a resting-place before the steep ascent began again.

So youth dances for a time in a gay and peaceful meadow before it climbs the steep heights of its coming problems. Youth needs its moment of rest, fulfilment, and delight in a perfect present. And we, looking on from the dusty pathway of our travelling lives, are refreshed and gladdened by the mystic beauty of the meadows in which youth plays. As a drop of dew caught in the meshes of a nasturtium leaf is more shimmering in beauty than a chain of diamonds, so the precious moment when the sunlight at early dawn touches the spirit of youth is the rising of a new hope. If this translucent beauty can be held, the world is created anew.

BOOK SEVEN

THE AGE OF PROBLEMS

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CHAPTER XX

IN THE WILDERNESS OF LIBERTY

BACK from high school, home from college, back from war, one is released and free to look about. Now looking creatively on experience one sees that it is good, but looking about vacantly one sees defects. When the curtain is let down on any act of a person's life and no new activity is begun, there is loss for a time. The end of a day, the end of a book, the end of a summer, of a Sunday outing, of a piece of construction, each leaves a vacancy, shuts a door, stops an activity that engaged and to some extent interested us. At the moment no new vista may be in sight; we are aware of a present end and not always of a fresh start. For the time the machinery has run down, the muscles are slack. Life has paused in us.

All this we are used to — on a small scale. But the end of school or college may seem like the end of everything. The new beginnings are so small or vague that they hardly seem worth while. The future accomplishment is so far off that it seems impossible. It need not be so, if we are sensible enough to foresee and to prepare for it. Theatrical managers anticipate the slump of interest

between the acts and arrange to brighten us up by fixing our vision on the future. The announcement printed on the curtain, the alluring history of the programme carry us hopefully forward. We know that things will soon move on again and so we are rather glad of the pause which gives memory a chance to run back over the past, to set it in order and enjoy it afresh.

It is the lack of programme or prospect (which means a forward look) that makes the end of schooling so much of a catastrophe — especially for girls. A programme limits liberty, but insures us against bewilderment and minimizes personal friction. Like the pauses in conversation at a dinner party, the pauses between one phase of life and the next leave us painfully self-conscious and uncomfortable.

I have been haunted as I wrote of this period, — the Age of Problems, by the old nursery rhyme, Jack and Jill. Marvellous novelettes are nursery rhymes. No wonder children love them. In twelve lines they condense a drama that engages the English novelist for three volumes. Well, to apply the rhyme.

Jack and Jill go up the hill of school or college, and there, as they look off, they dream of many things. But they must come down into the humdrum valley of daily life. And they must carry with them from the top to the bottom that heavy and swaying thing, a pail of common water. They think of what they have gained as gold or jewels, easy to hold and welcomed by all the world. But water, just everyday water, is unsteady and easily

splashes in the wrong place. Stumbling downhill Jack and Jill lose their vision, fall and are bruised. Modern parents are not so unlike those in the nursery rhyme and hence something like this often happens: "How delightful it will be to have Jack and Jill at home again. Everything will be lively when they come back from college," their parents said. But when the children came it was n't lively or delightful. Jack, who used to be so jolly, was positively sullen, while Jill, the rosebud of the family, had developed thorns and prickles.

Meantime Jack and Jill have also been thinking: "How great it will be to live at home once more!" But they too are baffled. Home, which was once a shelter, now seems cramped. Parents who could heal the bruises of childhood seem helpless before the problem of growing-pains. "Sometimes I wish you were a little child again," my mother once said in such a time of unhappiness; "I could always comfort you then." The grown-up children, too, have lost the power to name their trouble. That increases the difficulty of the case.

Yet, though the situation is often unaccountably disconcerting to parents and children alike, it has a single and sufficient cause — an overdose of liberty. "Sweet land of liberty" we sing. Ah! but liberty turns sour if it is not used in service. Liberty is disappointment at first because it is losing your appointed place. The life of liberty holds no comfortable resting-place for the youth of America; it is full of stings and goads. Deeper and deeper the goad of liberty pricks till he is

apt to become harassing to himself and annoying to those about him, who cannot for the life of them see why he should not be happy now that he has nothing to do. But was any one less saintly than Simeon Stylites an agreeable companion when he was being pricked by an invisible pin? Though every one recognized after the first jubilations that the free Russians were more problematic than the bound, we earn slowly and forget with curious quickness the pangs due to personal liberty. Yet freedom is but the chance to choose where we shall bind ourselves; and the struggle to be attached is fully as insistent and nerve-racking as the struggle to be free.

This problem of reattachment, almost of rebirth, begins at no one age. It begins whenever the break comes between *ordered* life — I use the word "order" in both its senses — of school or college, or of routine duties at home, and the acceptance of a new order, a chosen work. For those bound by poverty or very early marriage, and for those who see their way clearly from stage to stage, this period of discontent may never come. It is most acute in the well-to-do, but is apt to be present wherever choice is open to a mind that cannot easily choose. "Me this uncharted freedom tires" is the ache of many a lad who would scorn to read an Ode to Duty, and who had never before suspected that he could be bored by having no binding tasks, no chart, no chosen direction of advance.

The psychological effects as well as the circumstances of this period of readjustment differ with boys and

girls. I find that girls are apt to seem depressed and listless, boys more often sullen or self-centred; both are rebellious. Here are a few cases from my personal experience in relation to the unhappiness of girls at this age:

"It took me nearly a year to beat out of her all the nonsense she had picked up in college," a father once said to me; and he added complacently, "She's in pretty good shape now." But I wanted to know what the daughter had felt about it. As I came to know her well I saw the tragic contrast between the frail rainbow self-centredness of what she hoped, and the thunder-cloud darkness of the way her plan was received. These are the words of her diary: "I am at the end of my college life. I am going home to try to help my family. It will be glorious to be a well-trained, ready, tolerant girl, not putting myself forward as anything fine, but just quietly making things go better so that people will say, 'What a fine girl she is,' in the best sense of fine."

This case is not exceptional. The girl at least is typical, though the father may be considered exceptionally complacent. Yet even he was more puzzled than consciously ferocious. He wanted to free himself from his perplexity and he rushed upon the diagnosis of "All colleges are bad for girls" and instituted the treatment of parental authority. It is easy to make the diagnosis "college" as a cause of unhappiness. It is satisfactory to have something to curse. It saves self-reproach. But have you watched the society girl of

three seasons who rejected college or who was rejected by it? Is she quite content? "Do many of your friends have problems that baffle them?" I asked my cousin of twenty-one — a girl brought up in the happiest of homes, a girl obviously glowing with health, tranquillity, and beauty. "They all do, practically," she answered, half laughing. "They don't talk about it because they don't like being problems, but every one of them is puzzled and blue. They are waiting round to be married and they don't know what to do with themselves."

A Southern girl came up wistfully after my psychology class to tell me that what I had said about the frequent dreariness of the ages between twelve and fourteen was true. "But it lasts over sometimes, does n't it?" she added. "I'm eighteen and I feel it still at times, as if no one loved me and no one understood me."

"It's when you are especially tired, is it not?"

"Yes, I think so, but it always seems more than being tired. It keeps making me think I am no use and no one understands me. My family say, 'What in the world is the matter with you? You don't seem to do anything or care about anything!' That makes me shut right up. I'm determined they shall not make me over in their way."

"But when you reject their advances you make it harder for them to express their love just when you are most needing it," I answered.

"I can't seem to help it," she faltered.

I suggested, "Words are difficult, but could n't you

think of doing something they especially like? Actions are less conscious than words and make sometimes a pontoon bridge over which love can cross and rebuild."

Sometimes, as in this example, the outward symptoms of difficulty seem to be the relation of parent and grown-up child. This is, I say, the main *symptom*, but behind the symptom is almost always the need of a steadying activity outside the home. As I write the looks and words of a young girl are tingling in my mind: "Adolescence is unhappy, but it is worse at my age. I am eighteen. At thirteen you don't know why you are unhappy; now I do. I want to be worth while. I want to work, and I can't leave my home in a small town. Oh, I *hope* no one suffers such agonies at adolescence as I do now."

That this experience of the dreariness of being without a binding aim is a physical as well as a mental strain is brought out by Jane Addams, one of the most skilful psychologists of our age: "There is nothing after disease, indigence, and a sense of guilt so fatal to health and to life itself as the want of a proper outlet for active faculties. I have seen young girls suffer and grow sensibly lowered in vitality in the first years after they leave school. In our attempt then to give a girl pleasure and freedom from care we succeed for the most part in making her pitifully miserable. She finds life so different from what she expected it to be. She is besotted with innocent little ambitions and does not understand this apparent waste of herself, this elaborate preparation,

if no work is to be provided for her. . . . The girl loses something vital out of her life to which she is entitled. She is restricted and unhappy; her elders meanwhile are unconscious of the situation, and we have all the elements of a tragedy."

Jane Addams's words are confirmed strikingly in these words from the diary of a girl of nineteen: "We are born and everything is bright until we really begin to live; then we struggle on and nothing succeeds entirely, nothing in the world is perfect, and then death comes upon us. We realize for a moment all we have failed in and long for a chance again, and then we are gone, and what is the good? I was feeling so disconsolate and then I realized it might be like a soldier bearing his wound in silence. . . . Life will always be for me a rather sordid and certainly a disappointing and unsatisfactory thing. My only hope must be to see how little I need be affected by this, whether my soul can't know a higher life and not be dragged down. It's queer," she adds with a sudden vista beyond the mists of her mood, "I don't really believe this. I foolishly hope it won't be so, but I know it is true."

This brooding attitude is not confined to girls. Boys also may become almost morbid at this period. Robert Browning seems to some folk provokingly optimistic, but as Chesterton points out,[1] "Pauline" (Browning's early autobiographical poem) exhibits an extraordinary gloom and tragic sense of sin. "Pauline exhibits the

[1] G. K. Chesterton, *Life of Browning*, p. 20.

characteristic mark of a juvenile poem, the general suggestion that the author is a thousand years old. The poem is morbid. But," adds Chesterton sagely, "this is morbidity so general and recurrent that it may be called in a contradictory phrase a healthy morbidity; it is a kind of intellectual measles."

The full energy of youth — a powerful stream, meant to bend great problems — is turned backward on itself. Having no sufficient outlet it overflows its own banks and inundates the meadows about it. A dreary waste is the outward sign, not of death, but of stagnant life.

Writing these pages brings up, as writing so often does, a scene of the past, a boy of nineteen in such chronic depths of despair that he almost refused to speak; a boy who, when speech was forced out of him by persistent questioning, gave only two unenlightening words, "Don't know!" During those summer evenings I used to hear the submerged frogs in a neighboring pond making almost the same guttural sounds, and the one voice always recalled the other. "Don't know!" It was the gloomy, transient agnosticism of extreme youth. All the time he was fighting his lonely way through thick woods. He was forced by his own struggling conscience into skepticism and disobedience to his parents. He, who had been an exceptionally loving and gentle child, became in after years an exceptionally loving and understanding man; but just then all his puzzled parents could hear were those two words in monotone: "Don't know."

The gloom and self-centredness of this age is often misinterpreted. "He's so selfish," his parents say of that slender, dreaming, gray-skies-suddenly-lighted boy. Selfish! Can you really dub any one selfish any more than you can rightly classify any one as liar or murderer, or even as patient? As a patient is sometimes more a lifter of burdens than a sufferer, as a murderer may also be a keen and passionate lover, as a teller of lies turns under your very eyes into a poetic or wistful child, so a self-absorbed youth of eighteen is more apt than not to be a dreamer of great deeds. The real humor and pathos of the situation is that while you are blaming him for neglecting to rise when his uncle enters, he is planning to rescue a forlorn hope. Yes, he is ego-centric, but his ego is genuinely ready for running the gantlet of a heroic death even when it balks at running an errand.

It does not help, then, to call him selfish. (Did it, indeed, ever help any one in the universe, I wonder?) He has come home. He has n't anything especial to do, he is thinking altogether too much about Number One, and too little about the other one hundred and ten million. He is finding home and leisure disappointing. Disappointment and disapprobation stand not far apart in the lexicon. Disapprobation, disappointment, discouragement, even despair, these dark words linger in the windless valley of extreme youth; and so family reunion turns out in perhaps one case in four to be a time of friction and unhappiness at home.

CHAPTER XXI

CLUES TO ACTION

WELL, is it my fault, this maladjustment, and what can I do about it? These are the questions that parents ask often, and children occasionally, during this period. "I really don't know whether I am selfish or whether father is," one boy said to me quite wistfully during a period of intense conflict. Undoubtedly his father was at the same moment questioning: "What could I have done to prevent this state of things?"

The question by whose fault anything happens one can only answer if possessed of omniscience; but the question, "What can I do about it?" is fortunately to some extent answerable. Here are some clues to action:

Be prepared.

Grow as your children grow.

Keep your home faith burning.

Open an outlet through work.

Anticipation is one third of the battle. When we expect the easy and find the difficult, we are baffled; when we prepare for the worst and find it the better, our hearts rise. "Pessimism," as Max Beerbohm puts it, "does win us great happy moments." [1] But laughter apart, preparedness should be made by three responsible parties. Parents should recognize beforehand that,

[1] "Hosts and Guests," *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1919, p. 429.

though home-coming is delightful, home-staying will be at first hard, not easy; children should realize that freedom from routine will mean restlessness; and schools and colleges should try to make links between school and work, or school and home life, as the case may be. Vocational guidance, by enlarging to psychological guidance, could root out one element of the tragedy — the sense that one suffers alone. I believe that colleges and schools ought through some one of the faculty deliberately to face with their students the best ways to bridge the gap between the elation of the senior year and the footpath of making one's way up from the bottom at home or in work.

On the side of the parents even to face the fact that children are grown up and have outgrown if not grown away from much of the past, helps us at least to avoid two wrong ways of treating the wistful age. Let me give here a conversation suggestive of these two wrong ways:

"Does your mother give you good advice in her letters?" one junior asked of another.

"Gee, I should say she did! Advice is a mild word for it. If you followed all the directions in my letters you'd be a wiser and better man."

"But Tom's mother is n't that kind," shouted the second undergraduate. "Do you remember how she gave him a new Packard car for stopping smoking and after he had got the motor, told him that if he felt better when he smoked he could take it up again?"

Not the irritating jar of constant advice and not vacillation is the cure for this restless age, but warmth of compassion and steadiness of understanding. No one can be as unhappy understood as misunderstood. But the dauntlessly loving parent transcends understanding. Growing to heights of self-forgetfulness he attains wisdom. A mother, whose insight springs up to meet her children's need as new tissue grows to heal a wound, once put her experience in these words: "The best way is not to count on complete understanding. This expectation of entire agreement is the rock on which family ties have broken again and again. Of course I do not mean that everything possible should not be done to secure understanding. Take all opportunities to be together, open all channels. But a boy or girl just growing up is a mighty reserved critter. You can't get at them quickly. They shy right off if you try. Understanding is less important than keeping a loving and open attitude toward what you do not understand."

Children, too, need to learn that parents can grow. "It is very hard, Mrs. Cabot, to make your parents see things the right way," said a sturdy girl of nineteen as she stumped down Commonwealth Avenue, her soul and body aching for exercise. Yet she succeeded. She had the right kind of parents. They were growing folk, wise enough to learn from their children. In two years father, mother, and daughter were all at work for the city. To see parents shoot right up like young saplings is a pleasantly startling sight and just now a common

one. There was never a time or place when it was more clear that growth in breadth of view does not end with early youth. The incident I just gave has been duplicated many times in our America. Father and son, mother and daughter have grown, and thereby grown together. During the four years of the World War many a father and many a mother stood before their sons almost humbly and told them to follow where insight led into the centre of danger. Fathers and mothers abdicated authority with a definiteness and nobility perhaps never before seen. In abdicating they have suddenly found themselves not dethroned by, but one with, their children as they had never been before.

This democracy of parents and children must not end with the ending of war, for though the stern call of war brought the issue suddenly in our day, yet *always* there comes a time when young human nature says, "I can't obey father in an important decision if I believe it is wrong. I can't obey any one. I must decide for myself." Then there is but one answer. "Yes, with all my soul. You must think and decide for yourself, but not *by* yourself alone. You must think with the greatest wisdom that can be gleaned from the harvests of experience around you." Youth, feeling lack of sympathy and especially lack of an attempt to understand, draws back on itself or goes to strangers. The greatest gift a parent can give is to guide to the peak of his own experience and let the youth look off. But the power to do this means clearness as well as intimacy. To be of greatest help in

illness we must be trained in medicine; to be of the greatest help in counsel we must anticipate the coming situation and train ourselves in clearness of thought and speech.

Greater than clearness of speech is faith. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." [1] These magnificent words might often, it seems to me, be put from child to parent thus: "If ye have faith *in me*, even as much as a grain of mustard seed, I can say unto this mountain, Remove hence, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible for me."

For youth needs to have its creative plan watered by another's faith. Be the plan great or small the meeting of it with faith is almost the greatest gift a friend can give. Jane Addams, haunted by the tragic sights of poverty, conceived her plan of neighborhood settlement. A time came when she must go a step farther and talk about it with some one. But she was haunted not only by the world's misery, but by the fear no one would listen to her plan with any faith in her or in it.

"I had made up my mind that next day, whatever happened, I would begin to carry out the plan, if only by talking about it. . . . I told it in the fear of that disheartening experience which is so apt to afflict our most cherished plans when they are at last divulged, when we suddenly feel that there is nothing to talk about, and as

[1] Matthew XVII, 20.

the golden dream slips through our fingers we are left to wonder at our fatuous belief." [1]

Surely it is little short of criminal to lead a child to such a fear as this. New visions are precious and they are easily dimmed. Dig into the mine of your own past — uncover the ideals too often buried under the ashes of success. Cannot you remember some friend who believed in you when others doubted? I shall never forget mine. His genius for friendship you felt first of all in the way he listened; so intently and with such welcome that it was like seeing trees reflected in a still lake — beauty, quietness, wholeness came upon your vision. It is rare to listen as we would be listened to. Even rarer, perhaps, to construct for any one in clear lines his own dim plan. This man who died in the twenties achieved, it may be, more in the lives of his friends than he had time to achieve in his own, — vigorous as was his initiative. His influence lives. After twenty years many of us still looking back turn to his constructive criticism and his ultimate faith as our starting-point. "He always listened; he never said, 'That's been tried before and failed.'"

When we are most inarticulate and most disagreeable we need the most faith. Faith like lime sweetens a sour soil. It was extraordinary how young my friend found this out. It takes fifty years for most of us to realize it. He felt it at twenty-five. "There is a meaning bubbling up through all the confusion in Browning's poems," he

[1] Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, p. 87.

used to say, and this submerged meaning he looked for in every one he met. Have you ever happened to be one of the people whose remarks were persistently disregarded? Have you put forth opinions, timid or blazing according to your temperament, and found them looked at with a kind of blank stare? Have you heard exactly the same idea, uttered by some more word-wise and forcible spirit, welcomed and applauded? Ah! then you know why I say that we must look, as my friend did, for the meaning of even simple or extravagant remarks.

Many plans of work *are* fatuous and of course have to be discountenanced, even opposed, but opposition to a plan is very different from discouragement of the person planning. To take the heart out of a hope is killing, while transfer of a plan to a better plan may be life-giving. And even if youth's iridescent visions are dissimilar to those of age, theirs are the dreams that will affect the future, and no preconceived idea of the future or of the dreamer should cut us off from seeing them. We are more likely to need magnifying glasses than blinders in middle age.

"Wistful, overconfident creature," so Jane Addams calls the Spirit of Youth,[1] and her genius is that she sees both the wistfulness and the overconfidence at a single glance. "I can do anything, I know all there is to know," youth seems to assert, yet inside his soul he is touchingly doubtful whether he can do anything whatsoever. Does this seem contradictory? I believe it is the almost

[1] *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, p. 16.

inevitable response of the unrooted, to passing praise or blame, success or failure. It is inevitable as are its ups and downs to a floating plank, loose amid rising and falling waves. Youth is floating, it needs to be attached. Till it is attached it will bump about and in the process injure not only itself, but any one within range. Therefore, if a boy or girl is starving for hard work, work must be given. There are paradoxical times in life when the children ask for something really hard — hard like stone — and the parents insist on giving them bread — soft when they require resistance, satiating when they are longing for sacrifice. When any one hungers for difficult work it is cruelty to give the easy and even more cruel to hold them in idleness.

CHAPTER XXII

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

THAT entrance into service means amazing and usually permanent relief from depression thousands of lives could testify if they would unbury their past. Transfusion of blood acts no more startlingly to bring back color and energy. The two examples given below illustrate also the added difficulty, often felt, of "being the youngest."

Peter was the youngest of six brothers, and certainly not the least appealing of the family. If "handsome is who handsome does" Peter was handsome, otherwise he certainly was not. But he had the whimsical ugliness that combined with a keen sense of humor made his face a distinct asset. His narrow eyes and easily twisted mouth blended inimitably with his caricaturing voice, and he had accepted the nomination for office as "the life of the party." It took some time to find out that Peter was desperately depressed all the while,—depressed and miserably self-distrustful. He was full of admiration of others, a keen listener, a swift helper, a ready wit; but when you plumbed the depths you fished up something akin to despair. He had no special talent for study. Latin and mathematics slipped away while he brooded, and the climax came when, after sitting up all night with a sick chum, he failed utterly in his final

examinations for college. His brothers had all been brilliant successes, easily making the Phi Beta Kappa society and winning prizes and scholarships in a light-hearted way. They groaned over Peter and averred they had always known he would flunk. "I'm done for," said Peter gloomily as he received the report of his failure. "I am no good at anything. I have n't the slightest confidence in myself." The family heartily agreed with Peter and frequently talked him over. Donald, his brilliant elder brother, was especially called in consultation. Now when any one talks you over, you always know it. There is no need of listening. You overhear not words, but looks, pitying, sarcastic, critical, depreciatory. Peter knew that he was being talked over; he entirely agreed that he was a fit subject for solemn talk.

A world-shattering event like the War of 1914 starts many tiny earthquakes in its titanic path. It shook Peter thoroughly. It was great enough to move the depression that was weighing him down. He enlisted with the Foreign Legion, served three years in the artillery, and came back unscathed in body, but freed in spirit. "I was in the front observation posts much of the time," he said dreamily one day. "It is interesting to look back on, but I did n't enjoy it at the time. I was scared." Then he added, in a lower tone, "Well, the war did one thing for me. It gave me a little confidence in myself." That same autumn he entered the medical school. His problem was solved, for he had begun to

think about his work and thereby ceased to think unhappily about himself.

It takes a tough-skinned self to live unclothed by work and not to shiver in a working world. Girls are feeling that more and more every year. I recall one who came to Boston from the opposite side of the continent with a letter of introduction to me. She was to have a good time in the city, her mother wrote; study a little French and take singing lessons. She was popular at once. Every one found her charming, gay, full of fun. But although her popularity budded instantly, it never opened into friendship. Intimacy with her began quickly and soon came to a full stop. I saw wistful looks in her eyes one day and asked her if she was homesick for her father and mother. "It's just the opposite trouble," she said unexpectedly. "I have n't been homesick a minute. Mother and father would be awfully hurt if they knew it. I ought to be homesick and I'm not." That was all she would say at the time. It was in the dark with only firelight about us that she at last spoke of what was troubling her. Her haunting thought was the idea of her own lack of will. "You see I am the youngest and the boys don't think I have any brains. I don't believe I have. I am swayed by everybody. I never make any decisions of my own. I'm turned all round by other people." I tried to show her instances in which this had not been true. She recognized them with a brightening pleasure. Then, chasm below chasm of emptiness opened its lonely, reverberant depths.

She (the nineteen-year-old girl!) said of a middle-aged friend of mine, "It is good for me to see Mrs. Holmes. She's so fresh and I'm so stale." So stale! The fountain of youth was dry and parched. At last: "I am without either love or religion. It's terrible to live without them." I tried to point to the very longing and sorrow as a hunger for love so strong that minor love would not satisfy it. And I told her that the flaming love of God was very near to human love and would light under the spark of human love.

Although we had talked long and fully, I decided to write her a letter that she could look at and keep, reiterating the unflinching conviction that her desire for love was itself the voice of love speaking. It was not many days before she told me, "Oh! I do know what love is! I am so happy."

Yet unhappiness with severe recurrent headaches drifted up again before long, like seaweed tossed to the surface, and I saw that I had not quite sounded bottom. I was not sure whether the headaches caused the blueness or the blueness the headaches. She hated to be left alone, and while studying faithfully got little pleasure out of her French and singing lessons. She took up writing a journal about this time, scribbled away for hours every evening, and got, I think, a kind of release from the outlet. It was the only time in her life that she wrote a personal diary and she instantly destroyed the sheets. I found it hard to make her take any exercise. Except for her lessons she rarely left her apart-

ment. At home, where she had cooked, sewed, and kept house for her parents and the two boys, she had let day by day slip by without exercise, munching fudge as she cooked.

One day she came in to call on me with dancing steps and wistful eyes, saying, "I know now what's the trouble with me. I think too much about myself. It's almost a disease. I need to do something for other people." I told her I too had become convinced that work with children was what she needed.

Her father was willing to let her change, and it was arranged. She entered a normal school. Instantly her headaches vanished. She gained ten pounds weight in four months. Next autumn, eight months later, she wrote: "As I went to sleep to-night I thought what an entirely different person I am this year. I've never been so happy in my life. I'm all right now, but I was pretty well upset when I came East."

The following winter found her a girl so different from the dreary child of the year before that at times I could hardly believe the memories of the past. Except for rare moods her depression and self-reproach dropped off absolutely. She was eager and successful in her practice-teaching, much loved by her fellow-students. It is significant that it was during Christmas vacation, not during the days of hard work, that she got into knots with herself once more; normal school reopened on the 2d of January; with a sudden jerk the knots untied on the 2d of January. Her own knots untied, she began to

disentangle the skeins of her friends. Here is a letter written that same winter:

"Ellen came yesterday and passed the night with me. I feel a little more hopeful about her; although Harriet has been putting foolish ideas in her head and I am afraid she will change Ellen's ideal. Sometimes I think Ellen is proof against narrow views, and then again I'm doubtful. I suppose the proper thing to do is to work on Harriet if I think she is going to influence Ellen, but that is a life-work and cannot be done in the little time I have with her. They both think I'm terribly serious and have crazy ideas, but Ellen has come round and agrees with me a little. I just don't want her to fill her life with clothes, and 'going out' day and night. She is n't going to do that much longer. I know she has better stuff in her."

In the passage between the end of the normal school and the choice of what teaching to accept she had another and a final attack of gloom. She was frankly speaking unbearable and she knew it. A month later, after her decision was made, she wrote: "I know I behaved abominably when I was with you last spring. But I was passing through hell and no one seemed to care."

Obviously it was satisfactory and steady work that made the greatest difference in the life of this girl. But I want to bring out three additional points. One point is that the very time when we are most helpless is the time when we most need to help others. Again and again I have found girls and boys, baffled by their own prob-

lems, finding peace and wisdom by turning to help some one else. The watched problem never solves, but turn away to something bigger and the answer bubbles over. Fortunately for us, intruders, the instinct to help is so strong in young human nature that it will spring up in spite of our weeding.

The second point I want to bring out is this: We often help the baffled most where we expect the unexpected; look out for and believe in their unseen and highly improbable characteristics and talents. The unexpected thing in the girl I have described is that she is one of the most determined, strongest-willed mortals alive. Perhaps we should have known it long ago, but it was well concealed under delicate curves of youth and tentative tones in voice and word. Much more often than we do, I believe we ought to take the least intellectual of the family and open to him the fascination of thought; the least scientific girl and tempt her nearer to the marvels of chemistry or botany. The dreamy child may hunger for the development of the practical, and the intensely practical be starving for some bread of philosophy. Don't you remember as a child feeling yourself more or less classified as one thing and thereby excluded from the rest of a fascinating world, shut out from paradise? "She'll never be able to swim, she is too timid." "He is the practical one of the family. Books don't interest him at all." "Tom is exactly like his Uncle James; he's a perfect scatter-brain." Yet all the time I remember, don't you? that

I was silently and timidly longing to be what I was assumed not to be.

A boy I knew, skilful-handed, very useful around the farm, was kept out of school and classified by all his family as unintellectual. He began soberly enough to accept the shoe that pinched him, as a deaf child accepts his solitude. He felt himself dumb when others spoke of history, art, religion, science, politics, philosophy, for he was labelled "practical" and must turn his eyes away from these strange realms. But one night a friend of his father's read "Puck of Pook's Hill" aloud, and from the fascination of Kipling's story went on and on to tell of Roman walls, weapons, laws, and deeds of valor. Suddenly he woke up. Was this entrancing land the intellectual realm? Why, then, he too had a taste for, a glimpse of the intellectual. A new light came in his eyes, and he proceeded to dig his way into big books from the library till a new and permanent interest was added to his life.

My third point is this: The boy and girl uncertain in their choice of work, and with a lack of confidence in themselves, may need not only our faith, but at the right time our resolute propulsion. After a certain amount of deliberation the uncertainties that still remain can be solved only by jumping into the thick of things and trying ourselves out. There comes a time when to the recurrent question, "Which shall I do?" the right answer is, "Either, but quickly." Further light can't be had by thinking. The moment for a plunge or a pounce has

come. It is n't irrevocable. The choice is not made once for all. But to be sure both of one's self and of one's preference, one must taste, touch, and get the come-back from one's own act.

No friend or parent can wisely force any one into the stream of events. The doubter must make his own jump. But we can help by letting him know that others have jumped before him and been glad of it, that no other issue is in sight, and that the risks are after all less than the risks of further vacillation.

CHAPTER XXIII

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

There is another form of attachment beside that of work. The wistful age does not always make its marriage choice, but for most girls and some boys the vision of marriage is already present and that presence renders more difficult, because more intricate, the struggle of this age.

What do all of us need, not merely that we may make the right marriage, but that we may hold steadily the right human relations?

The right place to come from — our homes.

The right place to go to — our recreation.

Cultivation in the field of human relations, that it may not be an unweeded garden.

Training in loyalty to the two great commandments.

In teaching psychology I have sometimes asked an answer to the questions: What are you most grateful for in your bringing-up? What if anything would you add? (I began by writing the last word as *change*, but fear of parents drove me to the neutral word *add!*) This answer is characteristic, though exceptionally clear in statement:

"The thing I am most grateful for in my bringing-up is the comradeship of my mother. We are more chums each year. Closely on the heels of that, my country

experience, living among the beauties of nature for which I conceived a kind of feeling of religious devotion which I can never quite lose. The hay-rides, the comradeship with farmer boys, which I can never have and never want again, will nevertheless remain in the background of my development as landmarks to the best traits in the make-up of my present character. The one thing I think I would add to my upbringing would be more comradeship with boys and girls (especially boys) of my own age and class of standards, which would have brought me out of my reserve sooner and saved me much unnecessary sensitiveness."

Here are other answers:

"The thing for which I am most grateful in my bringing-up is our home life. Our home was made so interesting and attractive that we were glad to stay in and not to be going out all of the time. Then my mother and father were very understanding and let us have enough freedom, but not too much. It was altogether a very full and happy life that we led. We were taught love toward each other and that it was not right to criticize other people. Mother always encouraged us to keep busy, whether at work or play, to keep us out of mischief. Perhaps the greatest thing was that we were shown the difference between right and wrong, and that our parents really practised what they taught."

"There are so many things that I am thankful for in my life I am afraid it will be rather difficult to discuss

them in such a limited space. However, the most wonderful thing to me in my life is the love, happiness, and joy in our home. There is no discord, fussing, or discontentment even between us children. I don't think I ever realized how much this meant to me until I came away to school, and in visiting the different girls came in contact with the wrong kind of homes, the ones where there is no home life, each for his own pleasure, never thinking of others. This type of home and its restless unhappiness made me appreciate my beautiful home life, and resolve to try and have one just like ours after I am married."

"I am most grateful for the rigid rule I was kept under, not being allowed to be spoiled. The first thing I can remember being disciplined for was untruthfulness. This was the keynote of my bringing-up. If I were to add anything it would be the companionship of my parents. I do not bring this up against them because I realize it was an impossibility for them to be with us during the first fifteen years of our lives. . . . Mother and I are most perfect friends now and the last two years have been the happiest of my life."

Do not these answers demonstrate that parents need not be afraid of discipline, and that children crave their companionship more than at the time they always show or fully know.

As I look back into my own past I find the greatest help in the home life rather than in words spoken or

doctrines taught. Can I ever be grateful enough that through this time of dreaming and questioning, I lived with a mother whom all of us knew to be more beautiful and gracious than any child of hers could be, and with a father younger by far than his youngest son? I knew that they loved each other with a wiser, more devoted love each year. I saw the Christmas message that spoke of her after thirty years as "my ever dearer wife." It was this standard of loyalty and tenderness that made marriage real to me.

Not long ago a lady of seventy showed me with tender pride a telegram from her husband after she had been absent for a single night: "Take good care of yourself, dear. Few men have such a wonderful wife as you are." Would not that telegram make the marriage tie clearer even to the operator who heard the old gentleman dictate these words of honor?

In my own youth I had a glimpse of two lovers, married forty years, as they walked together day by day in tall pine woods by the sea. I heard him ask her with fresh eagerness each day to join his walk, to come to row on the water at sunset, and though his words were simply, "Well, my dear, shall we sally forth?" there was in them an unsatiated welcome, a newness of joy in his wife that made a girl of eighteen then and there choose the kind of husband she wanted. And what if a boy sees this message from one of his parents to the other: "I grudge each minute away from you, my best window open to God"?

By far the most significant preparation for marriage is, then, life with those who love each other steadily, as a matter of course and a matter of rejoicing. The worst preparation is life with the carping or cynical. One unhappy marriage (if it is at home) peoples the world of youth's imagination with similar or worse disasters. He judges the whole world by this one. He hears — as one half-terrified child of storm-tossed parents put it — rumblings as if an earthquake might overwhelm his life. Such a child escapes bitterness and depression sometimes by transplantation into a home of the truly married, and sometimes by the miraculous experience of turning to help his parents understand one another. Because a piercing pain leads to action more quickly than a passing discomfort, it may not be the cynicism of the unhappily married that scars the deepest. A sharp tragedy may by its very pain cut away the carelessness of a child. I've heard one whose mother was unfaithful say with intense seriousness, "It makes me know that I must be very, very sure before I get married." But the small, constant disloyalties of the happily married burn into youthful minds, leaving sometimes a scar that will not heal. Stray sentences that I overheard implying a petty unwillingness to face the responsibilities of marriage haunted my memory during youth. Once I heard kindly gossips say concerning a newly married bride, whose child was soon to come into the world: "So, she's got into trouble already." The words were baffling and shocking. A coming baby must

be a joy. A few months later, as I soon saw, every one was delighting in it. Why had they spoken blasphemously, these idle talkers? Could they not, in the silent presence of a listening girl, give their faith, their hope, their reverence, rather than their unimaginative and charring contempt? Even more commonly, perhaps, do petty complaints and accusations between husbands and wives who genuinely love one another, dishearten the idealism of the young. Here is a girl's own account of her experience with a group of her friends:

"I have known several girls whose homes were unhappy and who became desperately blue and bitter. They thought marriage was fiendish" (these are her own strong words!). "It helped them a lot to be able to talk about the family problems. One of them ran in and out quite chipper and gay after she had told me about them. She seemed to forget it more easily. But I think it helped most to have them stay with me where they could see a really happy home. It made them realize that happy marriages were normal and possible."

I remember being astonished as a girl to hear that two high-minded mates had had many a violent quarrel. I think I could have been made to see that though many — I came near saying all — happy marriages include times of misunderstanding, disillusionment, and temptation to snap, yet those who have faith learn not to fly to outsiders in time of trouble, but to take refuge — deeper refuge — even in one another.

The tone of the life around us is, I have said, what

prepares us best for marriage. The clarified tie between men and women, between women and women, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters and friends sets a standard for all our future ties — sets it almost as literally as mortar sets stones together, for the making of firm steps. Not between parents alone is this need of clarity. I have seen mothers demanding exclusive, almost jealous affection from their little boys, and the marvellous relation of fathers to their daughters bruised by something not quite translucent.

"Every man is the guardian of the better self of every person he deals with." [1] This exigent standard demands training both in fearlessness and in control. Children may often suffer or gain less from our direct relation to them than they do from our relation as man and wife to one another.

The right place to come from (and unfortunately it is not always one's own home), this is the essential in knowing how to choose one's future. Next to it comes *the right place to go* for recreation.

"Why do you go to the expense of building a great fireplace in the settlement parlor when the place is steam-heated?" I asked a social worker in San Francisco.

"I've found that the greatest time of moral danger for boys and girls is Sunday evening," she answered.

[1] Wm. Ernest Hocking, *Morale, and its Enemies*. Yale University Press, 1918.

"They've been off on an excursion together all day. They come back to the city tired, cold, and hungry. The girl cannot ask the man to her house. It's too crowded; the children are undressing in the only warm room, and there is nothing to offer him to eat. Then the man asks the girl to a supper, and there is no place so cheap and warm as the back room of a saloon. There danger lurks. So I tell the girls that they will find an open fire, some hot cocoa and bread and butter here every Sunday evening, and that there will be room for thirty or forty of them with their friends."

In my childhood I used occasionally to visit a garden that on the outside looked like any other garden and was especially strong in inviting seats. The garden was a fake. Every seat tossed you violently in the air. You stooped innocently to touch a flower and a squirt of dirty water hit you in the face. The old crank of a millionaire who owned the garden and enticed confiding strangers in for a quarter apiece must have chuckled to see their discomfiture. He did not have to pay for their ruined clothes. Those who knew about the garden went in, of course, at their own risk. But many had never heard of the trick.

Opposite this garden was another wide estate with great bushes of rhododendrons and an alluring lake where water-lilies floated. But this garden was private, and carefully labelled with the words NO TRESPASSING. So in the city, a garden seems to be open to youth for a few pennies, and they go in, some innocent, some trying

to appear dashing, some reckless, only to find themselves muddied and torn if they are not hardened.

"One of the most pathetic sights in the dance-halls of Chicago is the number of young men, obviously honest young fellows from the country, who stand about vainly hoping to make the acquaintance of some 'nice girl.' They look eagerly up and down the rows of girls, many of whom are drawn to the hall by the same keen desire for pleasure and social intercourse which the boys themselves feel."[1]

Jane Addams is thinking of those who come from the crowded, overburdened homes of the poor, but what she says applies — since human longings are the same — to the well-to-do. Boys and girls of all kinds prefer the private house to the public house, when the private house is a welcoming place. And the things that make a house attractive are simple and human things, plenty of food for hunger, plenty of friends for good-fellowship, plenty of wood and welcome for warmth. Those who come to eat remain to chat, and those who entertain strangers may hear the beat of the coming wings of friends.

In addition to the right place to come from — our homes — and the right place to go to — more often than not other homes — we need knowledge of human nature and, to put it in the active voice, skill in the practice of human relations, before we are ready — a little

[1] Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, p. 11.

ready — for marriage. By knowledge of human relations I do not mean sex physiology. Sex physiology, rather optimistically called sex hygiene, is always a small part, and more often than we know an *obscuring* part of information about human nature.

Sex information may obscure in several ways: First, by making us think we know it all when what we know is a mask. The taste of a nutshell does not give us its kernel. Man doth not live by facts alone. He lives by meaning, the spirit within the facts. Would it help a stranger to understand the love of England if I carefully informed him that the national flag of Great Britain was called the Union Jack and made of red, white, and blue bunting with crossbars of blue and white, some narrower, some wider. Three lines of Rupert Brooke's sonnet —

> "If I should die, think only this of me,
> That there's some corner of a foreign land
> That is forever England" —

give more of the essence of patriotism than pages of description.

But in all complicated and precious experiences there is an even graver accusation against superficial information. Information may not only leave us ignorant of our ignorance; it may distort. Facts too near the eyes of our consciousness (and the consciousness of sex is a very sensitive awareness) are easily over-visible, seen out of all proportion and askew. And, dropping the metaphor of sight, there is a time, especially in early youth, when

instinct is not strong enough, whether in relation to God or man, to overcome the doubts that onesided knowledge can force upon it.

There is a strong, and in part a sound, impression abroad that the discussion of philosophy in early youth will destroy the more delicate native plant, religious feeling. It is true in cases where native religious instinct is not tenacious. It is more true in early youth than in later life, because youth has often less firm hold on the solid rocks of experience which link us to religion through our roots and suckers, rather than through argument.

Just as there is danger of confusing the religious instinct through a one-sided philosophy, so there is danger of puzzling and even upsetting the normal instincts of human love whenever courses in sex hygiene are given with frankness and coolness to a large group. Though they are given with the honest, painstaking desire to prevent evil, the pathos of it is that they may cause the tragedy they try to forestall.

I could illustrate this danger of information by many examples, especially from the lives of girls, tormented so that they are afraid to marry, or at the other extreme vulgarly or defiantly treating the marriage tie as a jest. But most women will not need to be told. Even the word "sex" itself, with its long tangle of associations, is often an impure word to girls, leading to dark instead of illumined places. My experience with girls leads me to believe that they are often ready earlier for motherhood than they are for their relations to their husbands.

Little girls delight in playing dolls and imagining home life, and older girls plan often quite definitely for their future children rather than their husbands, whereas boys seem to think earlier and more definitely of wife, home, children, all together. If this is true it may mean a different kind of preparation with each, and a really very delicate insertion of the ideal of marriage with girls. In the case either of boys or girls, sex information must never be unsanctified by chivalry and by the radiance and the tragedy of human experience. It ought to be axiomatic that no burning subject should be touched with cold hands, no words of great significance, whether of love or religion, spoken abstractly. Great poets take gay or simple words and experiences and give them new and greater value. On the other hand, I charge the political orator and even some of the clergy with using great words that they have not won. They have lessened the value of some of the noblest patriotic and religious words in our language. Frigid use of words concerning love may do the same.

For this is the third danger of information, that it is disjointed from living experience and therefore does not truly inform. How we have lamed that noble word "inform"! It has acquired chronic stiffness of the joints. "I beg to inform you!" "Inform" means to put soul into, to animate, to quicken, to give life. The greatest danger of sex information is that it does not animate, does not give life to the soul, and that failing to give life it may give disease.

A fourth danger of lectures on sex hygiene I can best bring out by a phrase of G. K. Chesterton's: "Socialists," he writes, "have no sense of what things are private and what are public." [1]

Is not this lack of sense about what is to any one person, and I should add at any one time, *private*, our great difficulty in teaching all subjects whose greatness of scope and intimacy of application makes them swing from heaven to hell? I have known a father and son alike hurt and shrinking during the spontaneously frank sex talk of the mother of the family. They could not stand it at that time and in that way. To them it felt like blasphemy. To the mother it was as natural as to speak of her poppy-seed. The question of numbers and of the setting of a talk enters here. There seems to be a kind of middle distance in which words about such subjects as religion and marriage focus badly. A single person in the right relation and at a time when he is moved, can be told almost anything; the same is true I believe of a small group who have gradually grown unitedly intimate with a teacher or a friend. Again a sharp emergency makes it possible to cut clear through veils never before opened, for here experience rather than the teacher speaks. At the other extreme from the one-to-one intimate talk may come the appeal of a great orator whose overarching quality will enclose all his hearers as under one cathedral roof, and whose nearness to truth will make his words strike home to

[1] Gilbert K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, p. 337.

each separately. The middle distance, a typical schoolroom number of thirty or forty, cannot be lost in the whole or found as individuals, therefore talks to such a group are apt to go wrong. There is giggling here, morbidness there. Such talks go wrong because of the resistant strength of individuality. No one is ever at just the same spiritual age as thirty or forty others. In few of us does the soil for hearing difficult truths stay right for twenty-four hours together.

Every age must learn anew the most important truths. Insight into the nature of God and into one another can never be given in a single talk or at any one period. The question of a child of five, "Who made God?" cannot then be answered in the same way as when he is sixteen. The boy of twelve who, you assure your friends, "knows all about birth or marriage," does not and cannot know what he is open to realize at eighteen. It is a different boy listening, and even if your words were literally the same they would be new. Therefore we must be ready all the time and not only once to give the best we know of great experience.

Insight in relation to marriage must, I have said, come differently to boys and to girls, and it must be differently given and received at every age. As you cannot force open a bud into full bloom without injury, so I think you cannot prepare a girl (and probably not a boy) for marriage by any one talk or at any one moment. If marriage seems to you a life of loyalty, service, and mutual honor, a sowing of the earth with new

flowers, a mysterious sharing with God in creation, then from early childhood and in myriad ways you will teach marriage in all its meanings.

I agree that it is necessary to give some facts about sex, but I think these facts should be limited, and guided, in the case of boys and girls whose lives are relatively shielded, by relation to these definite needs: We need to forestall evil communications; to discourage prying; to avoid the possibility of overwhelming shock and to prevent harm being done by either sex through ignorance. This means that we must early and again and again give good communications before evil ones can enter, and that we must encourage the sense that there is no need of prying or worrying, because available books to read and an understanding person to talk to are always accessible. I believe also that the important temperamental differences between men and women should be fully talked out. For it is temperamental differences due to physical and mental unlikeness that we need to know in marriage if we are to keep from injuring one another — temperament that is knit of body and soul together, not separate. If I deprecate sex information it is when unguided and untransformed by human understanding. Anatomy and physiology do not, in William James's clever phrase, teach you to know a good man when you see him. A dentist may usefully recognize a man by his teeth, but if a lover knows his fiancée by the shape of her head, how can he help her when she has temporarily but completely lost her head? It shows val-

iant effort on the part of sex-hygiene and social-morality folks that they should try to anticipate life for the boys and girls to whom they speak.

It is more blessed to construct than to criticize, and far more troublesome. Notice the proportion between criticism and construction in political and social reform oratory. Knocking down is quick and makes a grand noise; building up is slow and relatively silent. To cast reflections on others is far less brain-racking than to reflect one's self. Nevertheless let me try the latter. It is a very difficult task, to make sure that marriage shall have the maximum of success. How can it best be done? First, as I have repeatedly said, by the right home surrounding; secondly, just as we gain in tennis by exercise, exercise in the right kind of thinking about human relations and exercise in the sense of practice.

Drawn by the hope that "candid and serious treatment of questions that are alive in the minds of the learners" is the most fruitful phase of teaching, I began in 1917 to teach classes in Human Nature and Human Relations. For many years, thought I to myself, the schools have been giving courses in Nature Study. Is it then essential to study bees and beetles, toads and toadstools, with care and unessential to study human beings? In answer, my critics, not denying the truth of my contention that human beings are more interesting than beetles, poured over my hopes one of two remarks: "It is being done already," or, "It can't be done."

The first statement is doubtful. There is much so-

called psychology taught in schools, but it deals with general characteristics, instincts, and emotions, with the traits shared in common by savages and sages, rather than with the significant individualities that make for incompatibility or delight. The field for teaching Human Relations is still open. Its corners alone have been staked out. The second retort, "It can't be done," no one need fear. It has been shouted against Pasteur, Edison, and Langley. It is speedily forgotten when the vaccine against hydrophobia, the phonograph, or the airplane is launched. So with the help of all the ages behind me I have tried to construct a course in Human Nature and Human Relations.

I begin with the family, and with the extraordinary fact that you and I and every one of us are alive. My pupils don't think it startling at all until I show them that we have been millions of years on the way and are survivors after the shipwreck of nine hundred and ninety nine in every thousand. I find almost no one of my students who has faced this situation. Life is one of the many things they take for granted, and often enough without gratitude, but the plain facts are such that it is easy to rouse wonder and some such new questioning as comes after a battle or an earthquake: Here we are alive. What ought we to do about it? Family relations and the history of the family are better faced after one holds in sight that slender, never broken thread that links us to the past. We who have been kept alive only by devotion of generation after generation to the life of

the next, shall we, too, not exercise loyalty? Beginning with the study of family ties, I take up each characteristic period in child psychology. I draw here largely from biography and autobiography, including memories of childhood from each of the class. After we have studied the conquest of faults and after each member of the class has made her own a great biography, we take up the amusing and thought-provoking subject of "How to get on with Difficult People — always including yourself."

It is only during the last months of the course that I bring forward marriage and the relations of men and women. Where a small class has grown intimate during the year, much can be talked over that would not have been possible at the beginning. I believe also that writing papers to be read by the teacher, but never discussed by the class, is essential. I go so far, indeed, that I occasionally ask pupils to write on a personal topic and not to hand it in at all if they so prefer.

Though classes in Human Nature and Human Relations are in their infancy, I cannot see them as unimportant. Civics, my relation to the State, concerns me surely less and is in less need of being taught than my relations to family and friends. Loyalty beginning at home will lead to civic loyalty.

The direct teaching of Human Relations can best be done at school, but parents have the far greater opportunity of surrounding their children with influences in art and literature that are human, challenging, and win-

ning. Books early read make a profound impression; pictures that one lives with as a child become extraordinarily endeared. It would be enormously valuable if we could trace the influence of pictures seen or books read in early childhood. I suppose many of us have had the experience of dividing family possessions after the death of our parents. In so doing, we find quite suddenly how much we treasure a perfectly valueless picture or story book. Like the house or the rocks or the garden of our childhood they have become a part of us and we love them even to the point of squabbling for their possession. If these pictures or books are wisely chosen they may teach us much. I know a man who traces his earliest chivalry and reverence for women back to George Macdonald's heroine of 'Back of the North Wind." Choose well, then, for the beauty of pictures of the Annunciation, the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, the Adoration of the Shepherds may more swiftly convey truth than any talk. Portia's nobly humble surrender to Bassanio in her moment of greatest triumph teaches more than any argument about a woman's career. Dante's vision of Beatrice encircled by light caught from looking into the eyes of God, Saint Francis's exquisite tenderness to Sister Clara, these penetrate like rain.

Or at a time when the appeal of more modern words and imagery are needed, give Barrie's picture of Mary in "The Little White Bird," Thackeray's Lady Castlewood in "Henry Esmond," Anne Douglas Sedgwick's "Shadow of Life," Kipling's "They," George Eliot's

"Mill on the Floss" picturing Maggie's intense struggle between fascination and loyalty; Barrie's exquisite and enlightening "Dear Brutus." Great writers are not the only ones who have written greatly about love. A minor author may become great in the novel that gives his intensest experience.

But after all I come back to the truth that it is home training in the keeping of the two great commandments that will count most in marriage. Of one home whose centre was the keeping of the two great commandments I think now — a house set among pear-trees with cedar-crowned hills above and the tide flowing in over the marshes below. It was a house of rushing, exultant hospitality. Even the ass and the puppy had their Christmas stockings hung; the birthdays of cook or nurse were festivals. And yet, though I cannot speak the names of that household without hearing the running of their swift welcoming feet, it was not the love of their neighbors that I felt most. In that house the first commandment was, as it rarely is, the first. In the light of summer twilight and through the blossoming fragrant pear-trees I still hear the voices of mother and children in prayer. The fountain of that home kept springing up because its stream came from the hills.

The last problem of the Wistful Age is peculiarly the parents' problem — the problem of *leadership in withdrawal.* Last year when my class in Human Relations had reached the study of Leaders and Followers, I asked

this question: "What are the qualities of a great leader?" To my surprise and delight one girl listed, among other characteristics, "the power to withdraw at the right time." "Good! How did you know that?" I asked. "Because I have seen mother do it," was her lovable tribute.

There is wisdom in this tribute beyond what is read by him who runs. Have not some great leaders in political life ended in obscurity or disaster darkened by their own shadow, because they could not learn when to withdraw themselves and put full confidence in another? Likewise the greatest parent is not he whose child is more and more dependent on him. It is he who gives his child wings and a glimpse of the sky.

I have seen, and you have seen, the other kind of parent, the mother who called her son of seventeen selfish because he could not obey her against his conscience, who wanted to keep him still dependent. She would do well to take to heart that extraordinary scene in Ibsen's "Pretenders" wherein the King asks Jatgeir the Scald to be a son to him. "I must have some one by me who sinks his own will utterly in mine, who believes in me unflinchingly, who will cling close to me in good hap or ill, who lives only to shed light and warmth over my life — who must die if I fall." Then answered Jatgeir, "Buy yourself a dog, my Lord."

None of us, when we ask for a child, wants a dog. And yet how near we come sometimes to expecting one! It seems scarcely credible that the bit of humor in the

sentences below was quite unconscious, though I have given an exact transcript.

"I'm awfully disappointed in Dorothy," said her mother. "She has no independence. She does just what the crowd does. Now Harriet is fine. She is absolutely independent. She always comes to me about every decision and then she does exactly what I tell her to." Have you ever seen or been a parent like this?

There are parents desirous of protecting a winged child from any flight, afraid lest their daughter may have to associate with common people. There are fathers so anxious for perfection that no son can come home eager for welcome, but he must first be scolded for throwing his coat over the sofa.

There are mothers and fathers whose children have been carefully trained to consider them all-wise and all-perfect. Somewhat of this desire to be considered perfect is innocent and stupid, but part of it is blasphemous. "I am not that light, but I am sent to bear witness of that light." There is no task more glorious than to bear witness of the light, witness through perfect truthfulness, through tenderness and compassion, through finding attraction in, and loving, the unattractive, through patience and through swift obedience to law. But if we try to be the light rather than to bear witness to the light, our darkness becomes, to the child who discovers it, a blot on the universe. In a sense, any of us adored by our child of flesh or spirit is mistaken for some one else. Not in us is the glory they see. But to be

taken for some one greater than we is not wholly a mistake. So magical is love that we can see its pathway and rise to be, indeed, what we are taken for.

A strangely fascinating characteristic of human life is that it always points on. Just when we have learned the perfect formula for milk our babies take to a stronger diet. When we have almost learned to give wise advice the time comes not to command, not even to suggest, but to withdraw. In the Clan Age it is only the clan who can interpret to a boy his own standard, and when romance comes it may be the youngest kind of a girl whose words will be wisdom to him. Withdrawal without a trace of abandonment is a delicate, sacrificial art. I suppose there has been no time in history when the withdrawal of parents and the entrance into danger of youth has been seen on so immense a scale as in the Great War for civilization.

"You can't love me as you did, for you no longer obey me," his mother said to him. "No, mother," he answered with a new firmness, and elevation in his tone. "I love you as much as ever, but I have changed in one way. I no longer think a thing is right because you or father tells me it is right." This is not a lessening of love, but a transfer of ultimate allegiance. If we are not to be wounded by this change, it must be because we own the same allegiance as he. Father and son during the World War may have been fighting together under General Pershing. The father did not ask his son to obey him, but to obey Pershing. Pershing obeyed Foch

and Foch obeyed the dictates of the greatest cause a world united against evil has ever known.

Withdrawal without surrender is the recognition that our special object at that point is attained. That we are no longer necessary is not failure. It is success. This does not mean that we withdraw discomforted and abashed, that we let youth unprepared exchange old lamps for new. It means the effort both to go with them as far as our vision can lead, and to point beyond to that promised land into which only intrepid feet can enter. We want progress, and progress means seeing ourselves left behind. Well then, we want, if necessary, to be left behind. But it is not necessary if we grow. It is the greatness of youth that it must leave us behind if we fail to advance. It is the greatness of parents that their leadership lasts through withdrawal. For what we leave behind may be but the tattered clothes of self-asserted authority. What we gain may be comradeship, a chance to become once more young.

THE END

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